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ABSTRACT

This book presents findings of a study that identified and analyzed 18 recently developed programs or reform efforts in the United States that stress effective parental involvement. Chapter 1 provides a review of education literature and research on parent involvement from 1945 to 1985 and situates newly emerging efforts within the current climate of school reform. Chapter 2 focuses on programs supporting parents of preschool-age children (Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters--HIPPY, Kenan Family Literacy Project, Center for Successful Child Development, and Family Readers Program). Efforts to help parents support their children's school learning are analyzed in chapter 3 (TransParent School Model, Family Study Institute program, Family Math and Science Programs, Megaskills Program, and Quality Education Project). The fourth chapter explores parents' roles in major school improvement or restructuring efforts (School Development Program, Accelerated Schools Project, League of Schools Reaching Out, and Center for Collaborative Education). Chapter 5 examines the involvement of parents in recent governance reforms (four programs--Kentucky; Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, California; and Dade County, Florida). The final chapter concludes that the programs share the following components, which represent new directions in parent involvement: (1) a core commitment to involve low-income and disadvantaged parents in activities aimed at improving student academic achievement; (2) origins in universities or nonprofit institutions, with sponsorship, implementation, and evaluation maintained by external institutions; (3) significant public-sector support; and (4) a strong commitment to reduce the gap between home culture and school culture by shaping program components to respond to and build on home-culture values, structures, and language. Contains 332 references, 16 contacts, and 4 tables. (LMI)

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New Directions

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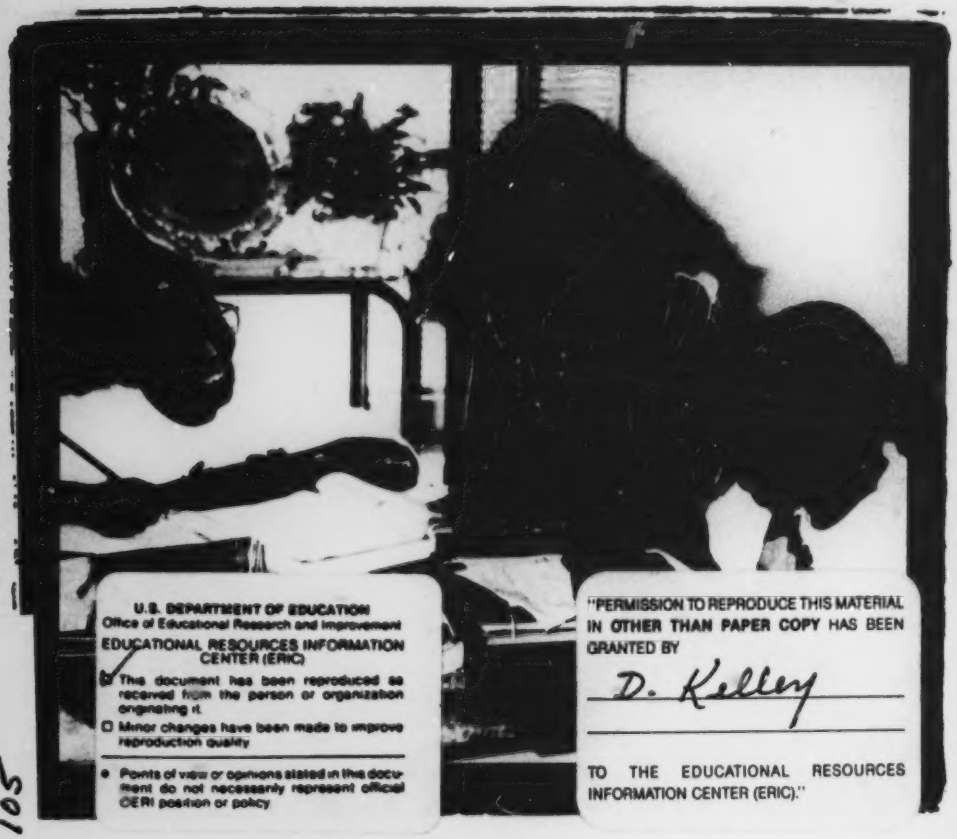

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New Directions in Parent Involvement

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Introduction

This study posits new directions in parent involvement emerging in school districts across the country. It identifies and analyzes 18 recently developed programs or reforms stressing effective parental involvement. The objectives of this study are to:

- Place the development of these new directions in parental involvement in a brief history of the field as well as in the current climate of school reform.
- Identify, describe, and discuss primary examples of these new parent involvement efforts in each of four overarching categories.
- Explore several hypotheses about why these efforts represent new directions for parent involvement.

This study is a policy analysis undertaken to contribute to continuing discussions about the role of parent involvement in improving student academic achievement, restructuring schools, and reforming public education, particularly in schools serving low-income and disadvantaged students. Several basic assumptions underlie the work:

- Effective parent involvement makes important contributions to student academic achievement.
- Existing forms of parent involvement often develop traditional and quite limited relationships between families and schools.
- When significant distance exists among the values, structure, and language of school culture and the home cultures of diverse class, racial, and ethnic constituencies, traditional forms of parent involvement often fail to reduce that distance.
- New programs that succeed in reducing that distance hold significant promise for improving public education, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas.

Work on this study began in November 1990. During the first phase, we surveyed and collected information about parent involvement efforts throughout the country to identify programs for extended analysis. During the second phase, we identified new programs in each of four broad categories:

- Programs that seek to help parents of preschool children support their children's development and improve their school readiness and academic potential;

- Programs that seek to improve the capacity of parents of school-age children to support their children's learning;
- Programs of school improvement that seek to accord parents significant roles, structures, and responsibilities;
- Programs to reform school governance and accountability that seek to accord parents significant roles, structures, and responsibilities.

We then examined each program's definition of its target population, origins and development, scope (how widely it was implemented), goals, components, resources provided, funding, and evaluation.

During phase three, we analyzed the relationships between these programs and the constituencies they targeted in terms of two broad categories: assumptions about parental needs and parental strengths underlying program goals, components, and methodologies; and the extent and quality of participation parents were accorded.

During each of the phases, we identified the characteristics differentiating these programs from previous parent involvement efforts. These programs share the following new components:

- A core commitment to involve low-income and disadvantaged parents in activities aimed at improving student academic achievement;
- Origins in universities or nonprofit institutions, with resulting sponsorship, implementation, and evaluation maintained by institutions that are external to the school districts through coalitions, networking, or franchising;
- Significant public-sector support through funding from federal grants, state legislative allocation, or district buy-in as well as private-sector support through foundation or corporate grants;
- A strong commitment to reduce the gap between home culture and school culture by shaping program components to respond to, and build on, the values, structures, and languages of the home culture;

- A strong commitment to develop program structures so that parents are empowered, that is, involved as peers and collaborators rather than as clients, by their participation.

This report is organized around the four broad categories of new parent involvement efforts defined above. Chapter 1 reviews a broad range of education literature and research regarding the nature of parent involvement from 1945 to 1985 and then situates newly emerging efforts within the current climate of school reform. Chapter 2 focuses on programs supporting parents of preschool-age children. Chapter 3 analyzes efforts to help parents support their children's school learning. Chapter 4 explores parents' roles in major school improvement or restructuring efforts. Chapter 5 examines the involvement of parents in recent governance reforms. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions.

The new directions this study seeks to identify stem from the emergence, scope, and spread of these programs, rather than from firm evidence of their effectiveness.

Because this endeavor is a policy study rather than an evaluation, exploration of specific programs is conducted primarily as textual analysis. The basic documents are published program statements and progress reports that detail origins, purpose, goals, methodology, program components, resources, and funding. Although we have conducted several site visits to most of the programs described here, we make no claims for program effectiveness other than by summarizing the evaluations conducted by, or for, each program. The new directions this study seeks to identify stem from the emergence, scope, and spread of these programs rather than from firm evidence of their effectiveness. For most of these programs, more time is necessary to produce the data needed for confirmation of effectiveness.

We are grateful to the staff of all of the programs we highlight for their cooperation in providing the information we requested, in hosting our site visits, and in reviewing drafts of our findings. Nevertheless, none of the programs are accountable for what follows. The authors take full responsibility for all program descriptions, analyses, and claims for new directions developed in this study. We welcome readers' comments about our thesis, the specific programs we examine, and other programs whose work confirms or challenges the new directions we define.

Chapter 1:

Situating Parent Involvement: History and Current Context

Positing new directions in parent involvement requires situating the emergent trends we discern within a history of traditional parent involvement efforts. But we have been unable to discover comprehensive histories of such involvement, particularly for the post World War II period. To provide a framework within which to place these new directions, we have constructed a provisional history of parent involvement since 1945 from studies of education governance, research on the effectiveness of parent involvement efforts, and surveys of parent involvement activities conducted to inform and advance the field.

To provide a framework within which to situate these new directions, we have constructed a provisional history of parent involvement since 1945...

Most observers seem to agree about the nature of parental activities during the early post World War II period. One of the authors of this study attended public schools during the 1940s and 1950s and remembers his mother's participation in parent conferences, PTA fund-raising events, and classroom and school support activities. This pattern of school support, buttressed by homework monitoring, report card review, and occasional consultation on such major student efforts as science projects or term papers, is perceived as the norm of traditional parent involvement throughout the early post war decades.

Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin and Patrick M. Shields, writing in 1987, offer a similar perception of parent involvement before the 1960s, but remind us that such involvement was clearly class-structured and tended not to include disadvantaged parents:

> *Deliberate, organized efforts by the public schools to involve low-income parents in their children's education are little more than 20 years old. The middle and upper classes have long had both implicit avenues of involvement (easy and comfortable access to teachers and administrators) and explicit means of participation (parent/teacher associations, for example) – but less-advantaged parents have been unwilling or unable to use these modes of participation. In the mid-1960's educators and policy-makers focused on parent involvement as a promising way to improve educational outcomes for poor or underachieving students, and they developed a variety of models and strategies to promote such involvement.* (McLaughlin and Shields 1987, pp. 156-7)

Among those strategies were forms of parent involvement mandated by federal legislation. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (now Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981) originated as part of the War-on-Poverty efforts of the Johnson administration. This

education reform created a national, federally funded compensatory education program for low-income students exhibiting poor academic performance and stressed the importance of involving the parents of these students in developing local programs.

In 1971, follow-up legislation mandated the involvement of parents of Title I students in parent advisory councils (PACs) at district levels. A 1974 amendment to the law required PACs at each participating school and also stipulated that parents select the membership of both district and school councils. The legislation was amplified in 1978 to give PACs advisory responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating all Title I projects. The Reagan administration eliminated these requirements for parent participation when it changed Title I to Chapter 1 in 1981, but districts were permitted to continue the PACs as a local option (deKanter *et al.* 1986).

Further, the national Head Start and Follow Through programs and Title VII of the bilingual education program required policy councils composed of parents of participating children. Public Law 94-142, which established the rights of children with handicapping conditions to public education in the least-restrictive environment, required the participation of parents of children with special needs in decisions about educational placements and support programs for their children.

A series of evaluations have probed how effective these mandates were in spurring local districts to involve low-income parents in the design and oversight of federally funded programs. McLaughlin and Shields offer their view of the research consensus:

> *...the general conclusion is that most strategies for parent involvement have not been carried out as they were intended. Parent advisory councils have been pro forma, giving parents little genuine involvement in the decision-making process. Meanwhile, efforts to stimulate parent participation in school activities have been uneven. The generally discouraging findings reflect, in part, the hesitancy of school administrators to establish meaningful advisory roles for parents. Low-income parents have shown themselves unwilling to serve on "paper councils" or to spend time in nonsubstantive roles.* (McLaughlin and Shields 1987, p. 157)

Even when programs emphasized involving parents in supporting their children's instruction, rather than increasing parent participation in decision-making or program policy, the

results of federally funded efforts seem quite limited. In the early 1980s, Oliver Moles reported the findings of a large study of parent involvement in federally funded programs:

> ***...while most projects provided some kind of parent education, usually on a one-time basis, few helped parents teach their own children at home or had arranged face-to-face discussions between parents and staff members. Thus, even in large federally funded programs there was little sustained effort to communicate with parents and help them assist in the instructional process.*** (Moles 1982, p. 44)

During the same decade that the War on Poverty attempted to mobilize America's poor to improve their economic conditions, fierce conflicts erupted in many of the nation's inner cities. Movements for community control of public education, fueled by integration struggles and intense frustration at public education's failure to educate black and Latino children, demanded decision-making power for parents and citizens at school and community levels. Don Davies, a longtime advocate of citizen participation in education, sees the emergence of community control demands as part of the general *crisis of legitimacy* that engulfed all public institutions during the turbulence of the 1960s. Davies argues that majority assumptions about shared support for schooling were shattered by the demands of community control advocates who "maintained that minority children would never be adequately educated in schools controlled by the middle class" or by white educators ignorant of the real conditions that students and families of color face. (Davies 1981, p. 102)

Movements for community control of public education, fueled by integration struggles and intense frustration at public education's failure to educate black and Latino children, demanded decision-making power for parents and citizens at school and community levels.

Protracted community control conflicts in New York City and Detroit resulted in administrative decentralization that moved some decision-making closer to the school level (though even this limited measure was reversed in Detroit during the early 1980s). Campaigns in Los Angeles, Chicago, and several other cities resulted in even more limited reductions of centralized decision-making power. Most urban school systems, though shaken by the fury of community control advocates, continued to shield decision-making from the families and communities whose children endured, or dropped out of, public schools.

Parent involvement during the 1970s thus exhibited the bifurcated pattern inherited from the previous two decades: broad-based but ritual participation of poor and disadvantaged parents through school system efforts to fulfill the letter rather than the spirit of federally funded compensatory education programs and traditional involvement of middle-class parents in school support

through PTA activity and other forms of voluntarism. Ira Gordon, one of the leading scholars of parent involvement during the post war decades, confirmed this pattern in a 1979 review of the effects of parent involvement on schooling. Gordon had developed a ***community impact model*** as "the ultimate systems view" of how parents and schools might work together, from the microsystems of family and neighborhood to the macrosystems of economic, political, and social realms. His review was an effort to test his model against the realities and limitations of existing parent involvement.

...in spite of two decades of federal support for parent involvement... traditional education governance had not yielded significant participation to parents.

Gordon put forward six roles for parents in his community impact model: parents as teachers of their children, parents as classroom volunteers, parents as paraprofessionals, parents as adult learners, parents as adult educators, and parents as decision-makers. Yet, when Gordon surveyed the research literature for examples of these roles, or his community impact model in practice, he could find only four studies of parent involvement's effects on children, and two of these focused on the federal Follow Through program. (Gordon 1979) Thus, in spite of two decades of federal support for parent involvement, particularly among low-income parents, traditional education governance had not yielded significant participation to parents. In a study for the National Institute of Education in the late 1970s, Davies and his colleagues report that citizen participation

> ***...has not resulted in practice in any substantial shift in power relations among school boards, administrators, and citizens. There is great professional reluctance to accept parents and taxpayers as partners in policy-making.*** (Davies *et al.*, 1978, pp. 9-10)

Federal efforts to involve parents in advisory and decision-making roles were decisively limited in the early 1980s when the Reagan administration rescinded the mandates for parent participation in federally funded education programs. But as participation in compensatory education policy-making diminished in many districts during the 1980s, other modes of parent involvement began to expand. In 1982, Moles and his colleagues at the National Institute of Education published a study of 28 home-school partnership programs initiated by school systems in upper elementary and secondary schools.

> ***Eighteen programs expect parents to tutor their children at home, 21 seek to use parents in broader socializing roles, and 19 encourage parents to help plan their childen's home and community educational experience. Thus, a large number of***

...new directions in parent involvement began to appear during the last decade...

> ***the programs assist parents in one or more of the educational capacities of concern in this inquiry: tutor; monitor of homework and attendance; guide to community educational resources; and leader of other home activities to promote student learning.*** (Moles *et al.* 1982, p. 15)

These roles are similar to those Gordon identified in his community impact model, as well as to some of the parent roles in programs we identify below, many of which began during the same period Moles's research was conducted. Moles's study also lists program characteristics and components, based on the 28 programs the study profiled, that are similar to the components of programs we examine in chapters one and two:

- Educational resources and strategies to assist parents in helping their children at home;
- Parent education, referral, and support services to help parents improve their children's learning;
- Channels for home-school communications;
- Opportunities for parent-teacher exchanges to improve student learning (Moles *et al.* 1982, pp. 20-22).

Finally, in an article describing a conceptual framework for parent involvement published in 1982, Barbara Tucker Cervone and Kathleen O'Leary propose four forms of parent activity within a continuum of involvement: reporting progress (equivalent to Moles's exchange of information through communications channels); special events; parent education; and parent teaching, both in school and at home. In a postscript, the authors note that they would now add parents as educational decision-makers. Their continuum also suggests some of the categories of new programs we explore below, except for grouped under school improvement efforts in Chapter 3. (Cervone and O'Leary 1982)

Thus, parent involvement from 1945 to 1985 seems to have been characterized, particularly during the first three decades, by traditional school organizations and support – PTAs and voluntarism – among middle-class parents and by formal but limited school district response to federal mandates to involve low-income parents in policymaking in compensatory education and other federally funded programs. Though federal programs stressed the necessity to involve low-income and disadvantaged parents in school and district governance, and the community control conflicts of the 1960s briefly mobilized those constituencies'

energies, the political restrictions of the succeeding decades marginalized their participation. While intense community activism for educational improvement has not, for the most part, reemerged, new directions in parent involvement began to appear during the last decade, as new initiatives focused on parent education, improvement of communications between home and school, and support of children's academic achievement in the home. Moreover, new and comprehensive school restructuring programs and broad-based governance reforms also stressed parent involvement efforts as critical components.

Why are we more concerned now about the academic performance of disadvantaged students than we have been in the past?

If new directions in parent involvement are in fact emerging, what factors have spurred these new efforts? Why have these efforts achieved national scope and significant support through public funding, given the limited receptiveness accorded parent involvement in previous decades? Several major changes in current perceptions about public education may begin to explain the support for, if not the emergence of, these new efforts.

Policy-makers such as Harold Hodgkinson have focused attention on the demographics that will shape public education's student body during the coming decades. Owing to a combination of new immigration and differential birthrates, at least one-third of the nation's school population will be students of color by the year 2000. Moreover, the barriers to effective schooling faced by current students seem likely to multiply in coming decades unless economic conditions change significantly. Hodgkinson offers the following analysis of the current school population:

- Forty percent will have lived with a single parent by age 18.
- Thirty percent are currently latchkey children.
- Twenty percent are living in poverty conditions.
- Fifteen percent speak languages other than English.
- Fifteen percent have physical or mental handicaps.
- Fourteen percent have unmarried parents.

(Hodgkinson 1985 and 1991)

Concern about who our public school students will be during the 21st century, as well as worry about the barriers to learning they will face, has increased emphasis on reaching out to parents and families and involving them in efforts to improve future students' academic achievement.

Yet, students encountering similar economic, social, and physical difficulties have struggled for decades against barriers to successful education in American classrooms. Why are we more concerned now about the academic performance of disadvantaged students than we have been in the past? Much increased concern centers on schooling's contribution to the potential of America's work force, given heightened levels of international competition and our weakening position in the global marketplace. Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, a series of arguments have tied the need for schooling improvement to our country's future as a competitive economy.

...increasing the extent and quality of parent participation has become a staple of school reform agendas driven by concern to improve our nation's economic performance.

The authors of *A Nation at Risk* initially popularized the notion that schooling failures, rather than the disinvestment decisions of American corporations, were responsible for our country's economic decline. Schooling reform, in this simplistic view, became the key to restoring our primacy in the international marketplace. Recently, more nuanced arguments have suggested that restoring our economic productivity requires transforming our current low-wage, low-skills productive base to the high-wage, high-skills, high-performance production that characterizes the Scandinavian, German, and Japanese economies. (See *America's Choice, High Skills or Low Wages* 1990; and Tucker 1992)

Many contemporary arguments about the need for economic transformation converge on school improvement as a critical requirement. Since much current research demonstrates strong linkages between parent involvement and student achievement, increasing the extent and quality of parent participation has become a staple of school reform agendas driven by concern to improve our nation's economic performance. (See *What Work Requires of School* 1991.)

Another concern propelling school reform emphasizes the linkages between poor school performance and the escalating social costs that inadequately educated and unemployed youth impose on the fabric of daily life, particularly in urban areas. Reformers and politicians often compare the costs of a year of schooling with those of a year in a residential youth facility or a state prison. Other comparisons stress the differentials between projected lifetime earnings of high school dropouts and high school graduates and calculate the loss of critical tax revenues that high dropout rates impose. The growth of what many observers call an urban underclass, without access to conventional jobs or adequate skills, is seen as imposing steep social and economic costs that make cities and suburbs increasingly difficult to govern, even to inhabit. School improvement, and parent involvement as

one of the keys to school improvement, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas, is, therefore, perceived as a way to enhance the quality of daily life in cities.

Finally, the social movements of the 1960s produced a tradition of advocacy on behalf of low-income and disadvantaged students, who often have been excluded from schooling and then discriminated against and miseducated by conventional schooling practices. This advocacy work has begun to link up with the progressive education tradition, originally inspired by John Dewey's pioneering work, to produce an increasingly influential reform literature and a growing number of innovative public schools based on the tenets of that literature. Parent involvement in collaborative decision-making is a critical principle of that reform literature. (See *The Good Common School: Making the Vision Work for All Children*, National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1991.)

Thus, a confluence of several forces has helped to generate the current school reform climate and the focus on parent involvement as a critical reform strategy:

...the parent involvement components of much current school reform focus specifically on how to reach and involve low-income and disadvantaged families.

- Demographic projections of student composition and student needs in the twenty-first century;
- Arguments about the necessity to transform the American economy and the role of schools in raising workforce skills;
- The rising social costs that poor school performance and resulting low skills impose;
- The renewed vision and practice of advocates and progressive reformers.

These forces have influenced reformers of all persuasions to look to parent involvement as one of the crucial factors for the school change they seek.

To the extent that school improvement agendas are motivated by the perception that our survival as a national economy and a polity depends on all our children fully developing their skills and capacities, reform agendas focus on children whose academic achievement has traditionally been limited. Therefore, much current school reform targets the low-income and disadvantaged children our schools have failed to serve effectively. Because the parents of those children have generally not been

involved in schooling activities, or have been excluded from participation by a variety of institutional and cultural barriers, the parent involvement components of much current school reform focus specifically on how to reach and involve low-income and disadvantaged families.

Rather than using deficit hypotheses to describe these families' situations, reform programs define these families as deeply committed to their children's success and seek to mobilize their resources, energy, and determination through programs designed to improve their children's school achievement (Garlington 1991). Because such efforts have become a growing focus of parent involvement activity, this report seeks to explore, categorize, and examine new and promising directions within that activity.

♦♦♦

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Chapter 2:

Programs Assisting Parents of Preschool Children

The five programs profiled here provide support and educational opportunities for families and their preschool children. A number of these programs offer parenting education, literacy training and job preparation, and referrals to other resources or service providers. Some also provide early childhood education and monitor children's health needs; others stress intergenerational literacy and provide adult education and career training as well as parenting education and early childhood education for participants' children. All of these programs engage parents early in the process – some during the prenatal period, most while the children are infants. They emphasize the critical early years of child development and the primary role of parents in aiding and supporting that development.

Many social and economic factors, particularly the steep rise in poverty among young families, created the pressure for these programs. The needs of immigrant families who may or may not speak English have also spurred demands for family support and parenting education. Factors such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence within families, and violence in communities have also increased the calls for family supports.

Past federal policies sought to provide poor children with early childhood education outside the home, to foster growth and development, and to prepare children for success in school. Evaluations of such programs indicate considerable effectiveness. The Perry Preschool study (Berrueta-Clement *et al.* 1984) found that among three- and four-year-old black children from poor families, high-quality preschool education improved their school success (for example, raising grades, reducing absences, decreasing the use of special education services), their likelihood of graduating from high school, and their chances of continuing their education or pursuing vocational training after completing high school.

The results of similar longitudinal studies of early childhood programs have received widening public attention as business and industry, foundations, the media, and policy-makers have pressed for more preventive programs for children and families. Often the positive findings of these studies are compared to the cost of remediation or to the rising social welfare costs generated by children who did not receive early education intervention. This increased public stress on the need for preventive programs coincides with expanding the role of states in policy education and social services and has helped to support the development of these new family programs (Weiss 1990).

Concerns about the feminization of poverty have contributed to new programs for single mothers. The Intergenerational Literacy Action Research Project examined the effects of community-based women's education and job training programs on participants' children because these programs were designed to transfer skills from low-income mothers to their children. Of 463 participants in the nine programs surveyed, 450 reported increased involvement in their children's schoolwork and their children's school. Case studies of a smaller cohort of program participants indicated that teachers reported improvement in at least one area of school performance for 68.9 percent of participants' children. (Van Fossen and Sticht 1991)

Studies of oral and written language development in children indicate that literacy begins to develop at a very young age, that young children are actively engaged in their own meaningful construction of language, and that literacy activities involving adults and children are crucial for a child's literacy development.

Studies of oral and written language development in children indicate that literacy begins to develop at a young age, that young children are actively engaged in their own meaningful construction of language, and that literacy activities involving adults and children are crucial for a child's literacy development (Teale and Sulzby 1989). Studies exploring the connections among home, school, and community, particularly research demonstrating the importance of integrating those connections in children's learning experience, have also contributed to the development of programs to assist families of preschool children (Comer 1988; Epstein 1987). Finally, evidence suggests that intergenerational and family literacy programs successfully retain adult students (Heathington *et al.* 1984; Nickse *et al.* 1988).

Funding for efforts to educate and support parents and their preschool children has increased over the last few years. Even Start, a new federal program designed to support improved educational opportunities for adults and children, funds projects that integrate adult and early childhood education. The goals of Even Start include helping parents become partners in the education of their children, assisting children in reaching their potential as learners, and providing basic education for their parents. Formative evaluation (Nickse 1990) suggests that such programs have demonstrated success sufficient to warrant further support.

Three of the programs described here – Parents as Teachers, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and the Kenan Family Literacy Project – are large in scope and provide significant training and technical assistance to community-based agencies or school districts. The two others – the Center for Successful Child Development and the Family Readers Program – are more limited in scope. We chose these five programs because their program components, assumptions about families and emphasis on empowerment exemplify the new

Program Descriptions

directions in family support programs we see emerging across the country.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a state-legislated program that Missouri makes available to parents of young children (birth through age three). School districts must either provide the program or contract out implementation to an appropriate local agency; parents of all income levels and all racial and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to participate. The program features periodic home visits by a parent educator hired by the school district, who discusses child development and parenting skills with the family. It also organizes parenting workshops and other opportunities to exchange information throughout the year. Districts network with community agencies to provide referrals to families in need and attempt to reach out to those parents least likely to use program services. The PAT National Center, located at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, provides training and technical assistance and disseminates information about the program.

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is designed for parents, mostly mothers, of four- and five-year-old children. HIPPY provides these mothers with a two-year curriculum, lesson plans, and materials to help them teach their children specific skills to increase their readiness to learn upon entering kindergarten. The program employs paraprofessionals – neighborhood parents from each community – to visit participating families twice a month to explain the program and to review each session's lessons. During weeks the paraprofessionals do not visit, mothers meet together for discussions of lesson topics and related parenting issues; the paraprofessionals and the program coordinators also attend these meetings. HIPPY is designed to increase the mothers' self-esteem and to improve their children's cognitive abilities.

The Kenan Family Literacy Project incorporates early childhood education, parent education, parent basic skills preparation, parent employment training and counseling, and parent and child playtime. The program is often implemented in collaboration with public school districts and housed in school buildings. Parents and children arrive at school together and spend some time during the day for meals and "parent and child together" (PACT) time. Parents assist teachers or other school staff as part of their work experience. Other Kenan activities include an early childhood program (based on the High/Scope curriculum) and parents' basic skills education, usually in preparation for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Parents also participate in group discussions on parenting skills.

The Center for Successful Child Development (CSCD) is a program for expectant mothers and mothers of preschool children; it provides parenting education, prenatal health care, routine health care for infants and preschoolers, early child care education, and referral to other social service agencies. The program targets mothers living in six contiguous buildings in the Robert Taylor homes, a Chicago public housing project. CSCD is designed to integrate all the educational, health, and social services necessary to help parents ensure their children's healthy development and academic success.

Program components include home visits, in which parent-child advocates assess families' basic needs and discuss child development issues; a primary health care facility for mothers' prenatal care and families' basic health care; a family drop-in center, which provides structured and informal activities for parents; an infant and toddler day-care center; and a Head Start "wraparound" program providing full-day, full-year early childhood education. CSCD, like HIPPY, employs community members – the parent-child advocates – to enroll pregnant women in the program, make home visits, and staff both the family drop-in center and the infant-toddler day-care center. The program is also known as the Beethoven Project because of its affiliation with Beethoven Elementary School; the target buildings are within the Beethoven School's attendance zone.

The Family Readers Program, formerly the Parent Readers Program, helps community college students improve their skills by reading to their children. The program offers several workshops focusing on children's literature and specific strategies designed to help children understand and appreciate that literature. Workshops discuss the experience of this shared reading and students' use of similar strategies to improve their own reading. The workshop series is offered as an alternative to a developmental reading course required for students who score below the passing level on the college's reading test.

Table 1 summarizes the features of these programs.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of Five Programs Assisting Parents of Preschool Children

Characteristics	Parent as Teachers Program (PAT), Missouri	Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	Kenan Family Literacy Project	Center for Successful Child Development	Family Readers Program
TARGET POPULATION	All parents of children ages 0-3. Program is universal and voluntary for parent participation across Missouri.	Educationally disadvantaged, often low-income, parents of children ages 4-5.	Parents without high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma and their children, ages 3-4.	Young children (ages 0-5) and their mothers living in six buildings of Chicago's Robert Taylor Homes, catchment area of Beethoven Elementary School.	Originally, community college students, parents of young children, reading at 7th- 11th-grade level in placement exam. Currently targets parents in many other settings.
ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT	Pilot project, New Parents as Teachers began in 1981. In 1984, Missouri legislature passed the Early Childhood Development Act, which involved PAT as a component. First state funds appropriated in 1985. PAT National Center established in 1987.	Developed in Israel, late 1960s, by Dr. Avima Lombard at the Hebrew University. Used widely in Israel. Introduced in U.S. in 1984 by the National Council of Jewish Women.	Sharon Darling expanded the Parent and Child Program which then was adopted and funded by William J. Kenan, Jr., Charitable Trust in 1988. National Center for Family Literacy established in Louisville in 1989.	Conceived by Irving Harris and sponsored by both the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Chicago Urban League. Program planning phase began early 1987. Reconceptualizing of program components occurred later.	Developed as a pilot in 1987 by Drs. Ellen Goldsmith and Ruth Handel for students at the New York City Technical College, City University of New York. Expanded at college level and later introduced to other settings.
SCOPE	State legislation in 1984 required implementation of the program in all 543 local school districts. More than 100,000 families with children under age 3 served. Program replicated in over 100 sites nationally.	Currently implemented in the United States in 15 states at 43 sites. Most widely implemented in Arkansas, where 22 sites serve about 2,400 families.	In addition to 3 model sites in Louisville, Kentucky, and 4 model sites in North Carolina, 300 sites nationally use some version of the Kenan model.	Serves all young children and their mothers, intended to total 600 families for the original project duration, 1987-1992. Currently program serves 200 families each year and is ongoing.	Program has implemented 3 workshops a semester in a college setting for 5 years. Now being replicated in elementary schools, day-care centers, libraries, adult literacy programs, and the workplace.
GOALS	Strengthen role of families in fostering children's development and learning; increase detection of children's developmental disabilities; increase number of children who begin school with appropriate abilities.	Increase preschool children's basic skills and knowledge necessary for early school success; increase mothers' self-esteem and facility as their children's first teacher.	Raise educational level of parents of preschool children; improve parents' skills in parenting; increase developmental skills of preschool children.	Promote healthy growth and development of children from before birth through age five; help parents build on their strengths as individuals and as parents.	Increase parents' reading skills; train parents to teach reading comprehension strategies to their children.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of Five Programs Assisting Parents of Preschool Children *(continued)*

Characteristics	Parent as Teachers Program (PAT), Missouri	Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	Kenan Family Literacy Project	Center for Successful Child Development	Family Readers Program
COMPONENTS	Home visits by parent educators, scheduled roughly every 8 weeks, which cover ways parents can foster child development and allow for periodic screening of children for developmental delays or disabilities; parenting workshops.	Home visits by paraprofessionals to prepare parents for teaching their children HIPPY curriculum; biweekly parent group meetings, which cover parenting issues and others topics of interest to parents.	Basic skills education and General Equivalency Diploma preparation for parents; early childhood education for preschoolers; structured parent-child interaction period; parenting education; vocational counseling and job training.	Home visits by parent-child advocates to provide parent education, referrals to health and social services; health care for young children and prenatal care for expectant mothers; day care for infants and toddlers; early childhood education; parent support groups.	Workshops for parents on reading comprehension strategies for themselves and guidance in how to teach these strategies to their children; reading activities at home with parent and child; adult reading at home.
RESOURCES PROVIDED	Training and dissemination of information on PAT provided by PAT National Center; child development curriculum and developmental screening procedures, used by PAT parent educators during home visits; additional in-kind district resources.	Weekly activity packets for parents containing child's lesson plans; training and support of parents; formal recognition of parents' commitment to the program; employment and professional development opportunities for HIPPY para-professionals.	Training and dissemination of information on family literacy practice provided by National Center for Family Literacy; High/Scope curriculum used by Kenan's early childhood educators; guidance on instructional practice for adult educators.	Family outreach, counseling, referral, and case management; training for parent-child advocates in infant and child development and assessing family needs; provision of health care, day care, and early childhood education; informal and structured parent activities.	Training for staff; provision of adult reading selections; reading record for noting comments and reactions during at-home reading sessions; extensive multicultural children's library.
FUNDING	$13 million for 1991-92 appropriated by state legislature (though $2 million withheld from budget). Additional funding available through foundation support and school district in-kind contributions.	Primarily from Even Start, other Chapter I sources, Job Training Partnership Act, local foundations and businesses. The Arkansas Better Chance Program Act of 1991 increases the availability of state funds for early education programs such as HIPPY.	Even Start, Adult Education Act, Job Training Partnership Act, Vocational Education, the JOBS grant of the Family Support Act, VISTA, library grants, literacy organizations, private individuals, corporations, and foundations. Funding for seven Kenan model sites from Kenan Charitable Trust.	Major funders include Harris Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Medicaid covers some child and family health costs, and Ounce of Prevention Fund and Chicago Urban League have provided staff and technical expertise.	Aaron Diamond Foundation; Vincent Astor Foundation; Taconic Foundation, Inc.; Morgan Stanley Foundation; Office of Academic Affairs City University of New York; New York Telephone; New York City Technical College Foundation; Mayor's Office of Literacy Initiatives.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of Five Programs Assisting Parents of Preschool Children *(continued)*

Characteristics	Parent as Teachers Program (PAT), Missouri	Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	Kenan Family Literacy Project	Center for Successful Child Development	Family Readers Program
EVALUATION	PAT children score significantly higher than national norm. More than one-half of children with observed developmental delays overcame them by age 3. Parent knowledge of child development increased significantly. Concerns remain about program effectiveness for families speaking a language other than English and low-income families.	Longitudinal study of students in Israel indicates improved academic achievement, reduced incidence of grade retention, and increased rate of school completion. Mothers' self-esteem and involvement in education of their children increased. Current evaluation efforts under way by U.S. Department of Education of three HIPPY sites.	During first year, 85 percent of Kenan parents increased academic aptitude scores by two or more grade levels or obtained a General Equivalency Diploma; children improved developmental skills by 67 percent. Ongoing evaluation taking place at Center, including pilot use of portfolios.	Initial evaluation design revised to accommodate intraproject mobility and outmigration, school choice and other demographic factors not anticipated in the earlier design. Retrospective analysis under way to examine characteristics and experiences of families who stayed with program consistently.	Participant self-report evaluations and case-study interviews with participating parents indicate parents use reading strategies with children, perceive themselves to be reading role models, have increased number and variety of books in the home and maintain contact with children's school.

Program Characteristics

... increasing concern over the cost of remediation and special education had generated interest in preventive approaches.

PAT

In 1972, the Missouri Board of Education defined the state's responsibility to support parents during their children's preschool years. For the next decade, legislators introduced bills to provide supportive programs but were unsuccessful in getting such legislation passed. These yearly efforts, however, educated both the Missouri public and the legislature about the need for early childhood education.

In the early 1980s, the New Parent as Teachers (NPAT) program was piloted in four Missouri school districts. This program was modeled on the Brookline Early Education Project in Massachusetts, directed by child development researcher Burton White and evaluated by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Weiss 1990). The implementation of the NPAT pilot and its evaluation demonstrated the importance of educating parents of young children.

When the Early Childhood Development Act (of which PAT is a component) was introduced to the Missouri state legislature in 1984, much of the necessary support had been secured. In addition to the convincing results of the NPAT evaluation, increasing concern over the cost of remediation and special education had generated interest in preventive approaches. Several hours before the legislature voted on PAT, an amendment was added requiring that PAT be mandated for all 543 of the state's school districts. In 1987, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which administers the program, established the PAT National Center to provide training, technical assistance, and dissemination of information.

The 1991-92 Missouri state legislature appropriated $13 million for the PAT, although approximately $2 million was subsequently withheld. Districts are reimbursed for services according to calculations based on actual parent participation. Because of the variance in participation across districts, the state is sometimes able to reimburse districts that consistently serve more parents than the present eligibility quota, which covers approximately one-third of eligible families of children through age three. Local school districts are not required to provide services beyond the level of state reimbursement (Hausman 1990). Additional funding, however, is available through foundation support and school in-kind contributions.

PAT has undergone two major evaluations. The first, in 1985, examined the effect of the pilot project, NPAT, and reported significant findings about the pace of participating children's

development and participating parents' knowledge of child development. A 1989 follow-up investigation found that at the end of first grade, NPAT children scored significantly higher on standardized reading and math achievement measures than children in a comparison group. Further, parents of NPAT children were significantly more likely than others to initiate requests for parent-teacher conferences. Finally, NPAT parents were more likely than others to report involvement in school activities or attendance at parent meetings.

In 1991, the second evaluation of the PAT program targeted 37 urban, suburban, and rural districts across Missouri, including a number of inner-city and rural areas with high poverty concentrations. The study found that three-year-old program participants scored significantly higher than the national norm on measures of school-related success and children's understanding and use of language. Moreover, more than half of PAT children with observed developmental delays overcame them by age three. Parent knowledge of child development significantly increased for all PAT families after three years' participation in the program. The study also reported that district subsidies increased the number of home visits to families defined by parent educators as being at risk – that is, having poor coping skills, family stress, poor parent-child communication, child developmental delay, child illness, and failure to thrive. Study results indicate that one-third of the families perceived as at risk resolved their risks by the completion of the program. Areas most responsive to PAT participation and services were poor parent-child communication and developmental delays.

HIPPY

A longitudinal study indicates that HIPPY improves children's academic achievement and adjustment to school, reduces the incidence of retention in grade, and increases the rate of school completion.

HIPPY was initiated in Israel to help immigrant mothers prepare their children for school. The program was developed at the Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in the late 1960s. In 1975, after field-testing and revision, the newly funded welfare program of the Ministry of Education adopted HIPPY. Currently, approximately 9,000 Israeli families in more than 90 communities participate in the program annually. (*HIPPY: Overview*, National Council of Jewish Woman Center for the Child)

Introduced into the United States in 1984 by the National Council of Jewish Women, HIPPY USA has served approximately 3,000 families; the program currently provides training and technical assistance to school districts and community-based agencies in several states. Arkansas has the largest number of sites and receives strong state-level sponsorship, particularly from

the governor's early childhood program office and the office of the governor (Weiss *et al.* 1989). The program was piloted in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Russellville, and Pine Bluff in 1986.

HIPPY programs are generally funded by local agencies through Even Start, Chapter I parent involvement funds, Head Start for Home Start families, Job Training Partnership Act funds (for the program's emphasis on job training for paraprofessionals), and grants from local foundations and businesses. In Arkansas, 90 percent of HIPPY's funds come from federal sources, with the remainder from foundations, local businesses, and private contributions. In February 1991, the state legislature passed the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program Act, expanding the availability of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs, including, though not limited to, the HIPPY program. (PAT was also mentioned as an exemplar.) Funding for this program was $5 million in 1991-92.

A longitudinal study that followed HIPPY graduates through 10th grade indicates that HIPPY improves children's academic achievement and adjustment to school, reduces the incidence of retention in grade, and increases the rate of school completion. Research findings also suggest that HIPPY improves participating mothers' self-esteem, expands their interest and involvement in their children's education, increases their involvement in community affairs, and advances their interest in pursuing further education for themselves (*National Council of Jewish Women*).

The U.S. Department of Education is currently conducting a three-year study of several school-based HIPPY sites. Local programs also collect a variety of data on program effectiveness and impact on children and their parents.

Kenan Family Literacy Project

Early education specialist Jeanne Heberle and adult education specialist Sharon Darling collaborated in the development of the Kenan project. In 1985, Heberle and Darling designed a program to integrate early childhood and adult education to serve families' intergenerational education needs. The Kentucky Department of Education implemented this initial program, Parent and Child Education (PACE), in 32 school districts. The William R. Kenan, Jr., Charitable Trust adopted an expanded version of PACE and, in 1988, funded the establishment of three model sites in Louisville, Kentucky, administered by the Jefferson County school system, as well as four model sites in North Carolina, administered through a collaboration of local

school systems and state-funded community colleges. In 1989, the Trust established the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville to provide training to implement the family literacy programs. The center also promotes public awareness, disseminates resources on family literacy, and conducts research to further inform and promote early childhood practice.

... 85 percent of parents participating in the Kenan Project increased their academic aptitude scores by two or more grade levels or passed the GED exam.

Funding for three model sites in Louisville and four in North Carolina come from the Kenan Charitable Trust (McIvor 1990). Funding for Kenan model family literacy programs throughout the country comes from the federal Even Start program, the Adult Education Act, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), Vocational Education, the JOBS grant of the Family Support Act, VISTA, library grants, literacy organizations, private individuals, corporations, and foundations. A $2 million grant from the Toyota Motor Corporation has allowed the National Center for Family Literacy to provide a three-year challenge grant to three sites in each of the following cities: Richmond, Virginia; Rochester, New York; Atlanta, Georgia; Tucson, Arizona; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Findings from research conducted by the National Center for Family Literacy indicate that during its initial year, 85 percent of parents participating in the Kenan Project increased their academic aptitude scores by two or more grade levels or passed the GED exam. Children participating in the project's first year significantly improved their cognitive and social developmental skills. Preliminary analysis of longitudinal data tracking first-year project participants indicates that families' participation in the Kenan Family Literacy Project had a positive influence on parents' support of their children's education and on children's educational progress in the early elementary grades (*National Center for Family Literacy 1991*).

As part of its research and dissemination role, the National Center for Family Literacy collects yearly data on children and parent participants' progress, including pretest and posttest measures, standardized tests for children and parents, and the High/Scope Child Observation Record. In early 1992, the Center introduced a pilot project using portfolios to document changes in parent-child relationships (Popp 1992).

CSCD

Irving Harris, chairman of the Harris Foundation in Chicago, initiated CSCD. Harris, who has had a long history of involvement with innovative programs for disadvantaged youth, also founded the Ounce of Prevention Fund. CSCD began in 1987 and immediately attracted national attention because of its ambitious goal: early intervention in the lives of young children

and their families to ensure children's subsequent success in school. The program was designed to serve families in 6 of the 28 Robert Taylor homes buildings in Chicago, one of the poorest census tracts in the United States. CSCD's initial focus was on children born in 1987, who would reach kindergarten in September 1992; the program intended to follow these children throughout elementary school, to evaluate the impact of comprehensive early intervention on their academic progress.

Within the first two years, program staff realized that the extent of family poverty in the projects was far greater than anticipated. The staff then reshaped the program to meet these extensive levels of family need. Parent-child advocates now help families cope with damaging living conditions, crime and gang violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and isolation of families. The project assumes that subsequent attention to parenting and child development issues will emerge as trust is established and as families begin to use the other program components.

Staff now hope to follow the progress of children of participating families as they enter kindergarten and move through the elementary grades.

The Harris Foundation initiated and continues to provide major support for CSCD. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provides resources for the Primary Care Center, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has also provided major grants. Medicaid reimbursement covers some child and family health costs, and the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Chicago Urban League have provided staff and technical expertise.

The first evaluation design for CSCD projected comparisons of both the initial characteristics (based on entry-level diagnostic assessment) and subsequent achievement of kindergarten cohorts entering the Beethoven Elementary School in September 1992 and the following four years. The design assumed that all entering students would come from the six target buildings constituting the school's catchment area. Evaluators found, however, that significant numbers of children from the six Robert Taylor buildings zoned for attendance at Beethoven School do not enroll there. Moreover, children outside the zone do enroll in Beethoven. As a result, the first evaluation design has been significantly revised. Staff now hope to follow the progress of children of participating families as they enter kindergarten and move through the elementary grades. CSCD staff have also developed a retrospective analysis to examine the characteristics and experiences of families who have used the program consistently.

Family Readers Program

Students reported an understanding of the importance of their role as home educators...

The Family Readers Program, originally the Parent Readers Program, was developed for the New York City Technical College by Dr. Ellen Goldsmith, of the Department of Developmental Skills at the college, and Dr. Ruth Handel, of the Department of Reading and Educational Media at Montclair State College in New Jersey. The program responds to large numbers of adult students, mostly young parents, who scored below passing on a required developmental reading exam. Goldsmith and Handel were concerned that the traditional developmental reading course did not improve students' reading skills and may actually have encouraged some students to drop out. Noting that 20 percent of the college's students were parents, they decided to revise the program to tap the concerns of their students as parents. The program developers asked, "Can we link the parents' literacy development to that of their children?" and hypothesized that parents' motivation to improve their children's opportunities for success in school would translate into parents' commitment to improve their own skills and abilities (Handel and Goldsmith 1989).

The program was piloted in the spring of 1987 through two workshops and an evaluation. Students' response was positive: they reported high levels of participation, enjoyment of the books the workshop made available, and enthusiasm for the reading activities in the workshops and at home. Students also reported an understanding of the importance of their role as home educators, significant use of the reading comprehension strategies modeled during the workshops, a growing understanding of child development, and increased contact with their children's school. Finally, 80 percent of the program participants passed the college's reading test, compared with an overall college pass rate of 45 percent.

As a result of the enthusiastic response and the evidence of the workshops' benefits, the college significantly expanded the program. Currently, the Family Readers Program is being replicated in school districts, day-care centers, libraries, and adult literacy programs (Handel and Goldsmith 1989).

Support for the Family Readers Program has come from the New York City Technical College Foundation, the Office of Academic Affairs of the City University of New York, the Mayor's Office of Literacy Initiatives, and many New York City-based foundations. The program uses a variety of attractive children's

books, many donated by publishers, all appealing to a wide range of interests and various ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Evaluation of the Family Readers Program has involved the provision of self-report instruments to participating parents, informal observations of the workshops by program administrators and outside experts, and case-study interviews. One case study indicates that participating parents read frequently to their children, using the reading comprehension strategies developed in the workshop. Some parents reported increased appreciation of their role as reading models for their children; all parents reported establishing and maintaining contact with their children's school. Other outcomes are increased interest in reading with children and in reading on one's own, application of comprehension strategies to adult reading, improved communication with children, and an increase in the number and variety of books in the home.

Assumptions about Relationships Between Home and School Cultures

Traditional parent involvement programs often embody the "transmission of school practice" model (Auerbach 1989) and have been most successful for children of middle-class families whose culture is reflected in that of the school.

Assumptions about family strengths and needs are critical to how these programs respond to, and integrate, the home culture and literacy practices of families and their communities. Traditional parent involvement programs often embody the "transmission of school practice" model (Auerbach 1989) and have been most successful for children of middle-class families whose culture is reflected in that of the school. But most parent involvement programs have failed to reach many families of diverse ethnic and racial groups whose culture and literacy practices differ from those of the school.

The programs highlighted in this chapter engage the tension between transmitting school culture to the family and integrating family culture into program components. Each of these programs emphasizes the power of home environments, particularly the influence of parents, on children's developmental progress. Most situate their learning experiences in the home or, as in the case of the Kenan Family Literacy Project and the CSCD, situate learning in homes and institutional settings such as preschools or clinics. These learning experiences often tap children's family experience and culture. The Family Readers Program chooses children's literature representative of participants' ethnic and racial diversity. HIPPY is revising its curriculum to heighten responsiveness to the diverse racial and ethnic groups the program serves. CSCD celebrates several African-American traditions with families from its target community.

Research on emergent literacy, the study of young children's oral and written language development, indicates that long before the emergence of reading or writing skills, children develop sophisticated levels of literacy.

All of these programs stress the strengths of parent and community resources. Avima D. Lombard, developer of the HIPPY program, focused on the home because she felt that the most important developmental changes occur in family settings, rather than in subsequent schooling. Lombard's approach, which viewed the home as an integral part of children's education and valued parents' capacity to function as primary educators, opposed the traditional Israeli approach to disadvantaged children, which stressed provision of all early childhood education by school systems on site.

Yet, the programs described here share some traditional transmission assumptions (Auerbach 1989) because they often believe that parents need to engage in school-patterned practices at home to help children succeed in school. Nevertheless, Auerbach contends that children often fail in school because basic discrepancies between their home life and school life create discontinuities that limit their subsequent academic achievement. She cites ethnographic research identifying literacy practices among low-income and minority families that are culturally and contextually different from traditional school practices.

Research on emergent literacy, the study of young children's oral and written language development, indicates that long before the emergence of reading or writing skills, children develop sophisticated levels of literacy. Early communication skills develop through a complex interaction of what young children see, hear, and do, all within the social context of the home. Depending, however, on the context in which literacy learning takes place, children may arrive at school fully responsive to the school's literacy setting, or they may face great discontinuities in the school use of language and other forms of literacy. These discontinuities hinder children's transition from home to school; they also create a dichotomy in children's cognitive map, their representation of the world, thereby making subsequent learning extremely difficult. Further, this experience does little to validate children's sense of self-identity, a factor essential for their development and learning.

Auerbach suggests that the "transmission of school practice" model reflects a new version of the deficit hypothesis, viewing children from low-income and minority families, as well as those from families who speak English as a second language, as coming from literacy-poor homes lacking literate role models. Supporters of this view also see the parent-child exchange of literacy as unidirectional, only from parent to child. Essentially, they consider these children to lack the "culture of school literacy" and hold the family responsible. Auerbach challenges these assumptions because they do not reflect findings of recent

ethnographic research on family literacy practices in the homes of low-income and disadvantaged children. To avoid this deficit labeling, Auerbach recommends that schools integrate family literacy practices into their curriculum, especially those practices developed in the homes of low-income and minority students and students who speak English as a second language (Auerbach 1989, pp. 177-8).

HIPPY demonstrates this tension between home and school cultures. Its programs are structured on the belief that families can play powerful and positive roles in children's academic success. Parents are perceived as having far greater effects on children than formal preschool programs. Lombard's stress on the family as the target for intervention leads her to conclude, however, that schooling has received enough attention:

> *Despite the fact that the two major educational influences on children are their family and their school, all efforts to ease the disadvantaged child's way into the formal school system had been concentrated within the system itself. Although educators had suggested that the family was responsible for children's lack of school success, it had not yet been the target of intervention. This was not only due to a reluctance to intrude upon the family, undermining its ability to function as a unit, but also to a belief that nothing could help these families and the children would be best served by counteracting family influences as early as possible.* (Lombard 1981, pp. 7-8)

Attempts to align schools more closely with the cultures of their students and families are still relatively rare in American public education.

Lombard's insistence on the family as the source of the most profound effects on children's learning and development can be read as blaming families for children's failure. The other programs this chapter highlights are somewhat more critical of schooling's role in children's academic failure and therefore are less likely to exonerate educational inadequacy. Nevertheless, these programs' concentration on home and family as the site of intervention tends to limit their view of schooling's responsibility for the poor academic performance of many disadvantaged students.

Moreover, although these programs consider families critical contributors to their children's development, most traditional educators still assume that families, particularly disadvantaged families, must become more school-supportive, if not more school-like, to help their children succeed academically.

Attempts to align schools more closely with the cultures of their students and families are still relatively rare in American public education. Though these five programs attempt to base

their structures and components on family strengths rather than school-defined deficits, their program language and underlying assumptions are not totally emancipated from more traditional assumptions about family responsibility for children's academic performance.

Extent of Empowerment Accorded to Participating Parents

In our analysis, we considered how effectively these five programs involve parents as peers and contributors rather than as passive clients whose needs can be met only by external providers.

> ***Empowerment is an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater control over those resources.*** (Allen *et al.* 1989, p. 2)

A program empowers parents when its content is responsive to family needs, when it affords parents opportunities to contribute significantly to their children's developmental and academic progress, when it values parent commitments and contributions, and when it views parents as active peers and not passive clients.

A program empowers parents when its content is responsive to family needs...

These five programs empower parents in a number of these ways. Each provides opportunities for parents to make significant contributions to their children's development and academic progress. Some opportunities are developed through parenting education; some through specific skill-building by both parents and children. All of the programs assume that parents must play critical teaching roles in their children's preschool years. A number of them are school-based or involve parents with school personnel, thus establishing, early in children's education, the importance of parents' communicating with teachers, supporting their children's academic skills, and viewing schools as collaborators in the education of their children.

The implications of this emphasis on parents' empowerment and collaboration in their children's education are significant. First, it directly challenges the assumption that teaching is the exclusive domain of the school system, because these programs build on the complex and sophisticated teaching and learning exchanges between family members and children that take place well before formal schooling begins (Teale and Sulzby 1989; Glazer 1989). Second, these programs encourage parents to become conscious of their importance as their children's primary educators. But modification of the traditional assumptions about the limits of parents' roles rarely comes easily for either school

systems or parents; the obstacles to redefining those roles are often formidable.

Recent research identifies some of the obstacles hindering programs seeking to increase parent involvement, particularly for low-income or disadvantaged children. Lareau (1987) studied families and schools in a middle-class and a working-class community to define what schools ask of parents in the educational experience of young children and to see how parents respond to the schools' requests. Lareau found that the two schools sought similar forms of parent involvement: both encouraged reading with children at home as well as supervising children's homework, communicating concerns to teachers, and attending back-to-school meetings and other school events. Where Lareau found considerable difference, however, was in the parental response to these requests for parent involvement.

Specific factors support or impede parents' ability to get involved: parents' educational capabilities; their view of the appropriate division of labor between teachers and parents; the information parents have about their children's schooling; and the time, money, and other resources available in the home.

The middle-class parents communicated frequently with teachers about academic concerns; these parents questioned the decisions of teachers and school administrators or sought specific actions to benefit their children's academic progress. Parents in this group were relaxed and participatory in parent-teacher conferences. They viewed their role as an active partnership with teachers and schools.

The working-class parents communicated with teachers less frequently, and their expressed concerns usually focused on nonacademic issues. Interactions between teachers and parents were more formal, and parents were less likely to participate in discussions or raise questions during parent-teacher conferences. Interviews conducted with parents revealed that they viewed their role as separate and distinct from teachers'; they saw school and home as separate spheres and perceived parents and teachers as having wholly different responsibilities.

Lareau notes, however, that despite these differences in levels of participation, the educational values of these two groups of parents were essentially the same. While both groups endorsed educational success, they envisioned different roles for themselves and for the school in enabling their children to achieve that success. But the teachers in Lareau's study interpreted the differing levels of parent involvement as indicative of varying levels of parent interest in their children's achievement.

Lareau concludes that parent involvement in schools is linked to social class. Specific factors support or impede parents' ability to get involved: parents' educational capabilities; their view of the appropriate division of labor between teachers and parents; the information parents have about their children's schooling; and

the time, money, and other resources available in the home. Lareau suggests that schools' promotion of different modes of school-family relationships might more effectively engage working-class families.

How do the five programs examined here help parents become more active participants in their preschool children's education? All are based on the assumption that parents are the primary educators of their children. Specific forms of training and support provided for parents, as well as recognition of the importance of parents' teaching and interactions with their children in the home, convey this assumption. HIPPY, for example, employs members of the mothers' immediate community as the primary providers of support and education. Paraprofessionals – community members who may have been HIPPY parents at one time – visit the homes of program participants and review the lessons parents will teach their children. These paraprofessionals receive continuous training from program coordinators to help them prepare for home visits on a regular (often bimonthly) basis. HIPPY also supports their professional development and helps them pursue educational and vocational opportunities. As a result, HIPPY's use of paraprofessionals strengthens the community's capacity to educate and support its residents.

As with HIPPY, CSCD employs community members to provide program outreach to eligible families. Neighborhood residents make home visits, enroll expectant mothers in the program, and staff both the drop-in center and the infant-toddler care center. These parent-child advocates receive training in infant and child development and in how to assess family needs. They are critical to program success because of their community links and empathy with participating families. As with HIPPY's paraprofessionals, CSCD's parent-child advocates help their communities gain some of the means to educate and support themselves.

Social and economic conditions threatening family survival have produced these approaches to strengthen families and support parents and children. These new programs demonstrate that successful outcomes are most likely when provision of early childhood support and education includes both parents and children. They recognize that parents may not be fully aware of the rapid pace of early childhood development and of their critical role in fostering learning. But these programs have developed concrete ways to emphasize the significance of the early years in terms of children's growth and development, – as well as the importance of the parent-child interaction and the home environment in fostering learning before school begins. They also introduce, and build on, the concept of family-school collaboration

and the necessity for greater linkages between home and school to ensure children's academic success.

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Chapter 3:

Programs Involving Parents in Their Children's Education at Home and at School

Two decades of research have provided substantial evidence that children's academic achievement is linked to their parents' involvement in their education. Recent major study findings renew this stress on family involvement, demonstrating that school reformers must address, and work to improve, relationships between home and school. Rich summarizes the issue:

> *It is instinctively understood that family involvement in education is important, and a great deal is known about that importance. As a concept it is greatly praised. However, little use has been made of the research findings that affirm the importance. Schools have not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of today's families; and teachers have received little, if any, help and training in working with families. And families have not taken or been asked to take sufficient responsibility in their role as partners with the school or in the education of their children.* (Rich 1985, pp. 5-6)

Research has identified three interconnected areas in which family-school involvement has important impacts, regardless of families' economic level or ethnic and cultural background. First, focusing support on the home helps parents create a family environment that aids student achievement; such focus can extend academic learning and reinforce behaviors taught at school. Second, strengthening parents' linkages to schools can produce important and demonstrable learning gains for children. Third, focusing on schools' critical role in creating strategies and structures for involvement helps make parents powerful partners in their children's education.

Much recent work, particularly that of Joyce Epstein, demonstrates that supportive home environments help children succeed in school in two ways:

- Children work successfully toward goals and values when they recognize that the attitudes and expectations of both home and school overlap.

- Children's academic achievement improves when families demonstrate their connection to school goals by encouraging their children's intellectual development, studying with them, showing approval of school activities, and respecting their children's efforts.

Children's growth and development benefit from a sense of partnership between the parent and school. Parents provide the continuity children need to succeed as they progress through the

education system and help to integrate children's experience at home, in school, and in the community.

Many families, particularly low-income and disadvantaged families, face considerable barriers when they attempt to collaborate with schools.

Epstein's research demonstrates that parents who are involved in school activities are more likely than others to have positive views of teachers. These parents give higher ratings to teachers' interpersonal skills and professional abilities and express greater appreciation for teachers' efforts on behalf of their children. They report greater confidence in the school's ability to provide a positive learning environment. These endorsements of teachers and schools translate into stronger parental support for curriculum development, teacher benefits, and school funding.

Parents' level and quality of involvement are linked directly to specific school practices. When schools develop strong involvement programs, parents are more supportive of their children's learning at school and at home. Parents who lack knowledge of school practices and programs, particularly low-income and disadvantaged parents, do not lack interest in the schools their children attend. Often their schools have failed to develop appropriate strategies for involving them. Epstein's research indicates that when schools don't involve parents, parent education and family social class help determine who gets involved. But social class and education level tend to become less important factors when schools commit themselves to parent involvement and work to improve it.

Several major approaches to developing meaningful parental involvement stress the necessity to involve all parents and to reduce the barriers of race and class. One approach uses the concept of ecology to describe how families function in an interdependent world. Children, this approach argues, are linked to family, neighborhood, community, and school; each influences and is influenced by the other. Consequently, in this framework, neither parents, schools, nor communities bear the sole responsibility for children's academic success. Conversely, none working in isolation from the others can ensure children's success.

A second concept, the nondeficit approach, challenges the assumption that families of low-income or disadvantaged children are deficient and insists that schools respect the assets and strengths that all families bring to their children's learning. Empowerment is a related process through which parents become active participants, rather than passive clients, in helping to structure their children's learning environments at home and at school. Finally, the concept of collaboration implies that schools alone cannot provide all the services that families need.

Many families, particularly low-income and disadvantaged families, face considerable barriers when they attempt to collaborate with schools. Research has consistently identified a number of such barriers to involvement:

- Low-income and minority families often are geographically, culturally, and psychologically distant from schools.
- Parents face extraordinary demands on time and energy as they struggle to meet their family's needs.
- Teachers lack the training to work collaboratively with families.
- Race and class biases have traditionally shaped, and limited, the culture of schools.

The programs profiled here have recognized and attempted to overcome these barriers through the development of new outreach components. All five programs hope to reproduce the benefits of parent involvement both past and current research has indicated: increased academic achievement, improved student motivation, more regular school attendance, reduced dropout rates, and increased family and community support for schools.

Program Descriptions

The TransParent School Model focuses on removing barriers to family and school interaction caused by limitations in parents' time, skills, and information. The program provides daily two-way communication between teachers and parents, using the telephone as the primary link between home and school. Parents dial a special school number that provides a recorded message informing them of classroom and school activities. They can also receive targeted electronic messages about their own children's accomplishments and can leave messages detailing their reactions and concerns.

This program was developed at the Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, in 1987. The first demonstration site was the Academy for Academics and Arts, a K-8 magnet school in Huntsville, Alabama. A second pilot program was initiated in 1989 at the Carter Lawrence Middle School in Nashville, Tennessee. At the beginning of the 1990-91 school year, the TransParent School Model was operating in 36 locations in eight states, serving Head Start programs as well as elementary and middle schools. All sites are urban facilities serving primarily low-income and minority students.

Funding and technical assistance for the TransParent School Model originally came from the BellSouth Foundation and Central Bell. Support is now available from public funds as well as from parent-teacher groups, foundations, and businesses.

The Family Study Institute program assumes that parents powerfully influence their children's motivation and academic achievement. The program offers two parent education courses to be implemented by elementary schools. The courses help parents create home environments that encourage good study habits, parent-child communication about school-related activities, and family reading. Each course consists of three weekly group sessions at school, supplemented by assigned weekly activities for parents at home. Volunteer parents function as group leaders, guiding small groups of other parents through curriculum materials and home learning activities.

The courses were developed in the mid-1980s by the Academic Development Institute, a Chicago-based nonprofit organization. With support from private foundations, the courses were piloted in 45 Chicago elementary schools in low-income and minority neighborhoods. The courses are not targeted, however, for particular types of schools.

Family Math and Science Programs provide joint classes for parents and children in problem-solving and hands-on mathematics and science activities to reinforce school curriculum through home-based learning activities. Weekly classes, taught by specially trained teachers and parents, take place across six-week cycles in both school and community settings. The programs were developed to address the lack of interest and limited abilities in math and science among female and minority students and the resulting underrepresentation of these groups in postsecondary education programs and professional careers such as science and engineering.

The Family Math Program was developed in 1981 at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Classes began in 1982 and quickly spread through concerted training efforts to sites across the country. In 1988, the National Science Foundation provided funding for the dissemination of the Family Math Program by five minority community-based organizations. That same year, Northwest Equals at Portland State University initiated the companion Family Science Program with a grant from the Chevron Corporation.

The Megaskills Program engages parents and community volunteers to help children acquire, at home, skills and

attitudes, such as teamwork and problem-solving, that are linked to successful school performance. Parents and community leaders are trained in a series of eight highly structured workshops. Limited technical assistance and support are available subsequently from the program.

These workshops were developed in 1989 by the Home and School Institute, a Washington, D.C. - based nonprofit educational organization founded in 1964 to provide programs and resources to support families' educational roles. The MacArthur Foundation provided initial funding for the Megaskills Program.

The Quality Education Project (QEP) was initiated in 1982 in California as a nonprofit organization to mobilize support for education among parents of low-income and minority students. The project evolved into a highly structured school-based program that seeks to improve home-school communications, build family support for schools, develop parent education to encourage parent-child interaction, and encourage home learning activities to enable parents to reinforce skills learned at school. The program includes trained site coordinators, staff development, parent training, resource materials, and intensive technical assistance to school personnel.

Initial support came from foundation grants and federal and state education funds to California school districts. Additional foundation support has enabled the elementary school program to expand to other states; this support has also underwritten development of middle and high school pilot sites.

Table 2 summarizes the features of these programs.

TABLE 2. Characteristics of Five Programs Involving Parents in Their Children's Education

Characteristics	Transparent School Model	Family Study Institute	Family Math and Science Programs	Megaskills Program	Quality Education Project
TARGET POPULATION	Poorly performing urban public elementary and middle schools.	Public elementary schools serving predominantly low-income minority populations.	Low-income female and minority students and their parents.	No specific population targeted. Serves both low-income and middle-class families.	Public elementary schools serving primarily low-income and minority students.
ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT	Developed in 1987 at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Piloted in 1987 in an Alabama grade school and in 1989 in a Tennessee middle school.	Developed by the nonprofit Academic Development Institute; piloted in 1985 in three Chicago elementary schools.	Family Math developed in 1981 at the University of California, Berkeley; Family Science developed in 1988 at Portland State University in Oregon.	Developed and piloted by the nonprofit Home and School Institute in 1989.	Initiated in 1982; one California school district as pilot location in 1984.
SCOPE	Since 1990, the model has been in use in 36 Head Start programs, elementary schools, and middle schools in eight states.	Program's courses offered in 55 elementary schools in Chicago, 50 other schools in Illinois, and 20 schools elsewhere.	More than 600 Family Math programs in 27 states, with 15,000 students and their parents having participated. Family Science now available in 31 states through 70 school and community agencies.	By late 1990, 727 workshop leaders were trained; 7,500 parents in 25 states had participated in workshops.	Currently in 332 elementary and middle schools in 47 California school districts, seven Mississippi school districts, and four Indiana school districts.
GOALS	To remove barriers to interaction between parents and teachers by keeping parents informed daily about school activities.	To help parents create a positive study environment at home, communicate with their children about school, and improve their children's language skills.	To improve math and science skills of at-risk students and involve their parents as partners in their children's learning.	To give parents skills and techniques to reinforce children's in-school learning.	To improve students' academic achievement by involving parents in their children's learning and fostering collegial school-community relationships.
COMPONENTS	School personnel record telephone messages about homework, school and classroom activities. Messages can be electronically targeted to individuals or groups of parents, who can leave recorded responses.	Two courses sponsored by individual schools that provide classes, materials, and home learning activities to parent participants. Child care and other incentives offered to recruit and retain parents.	Training-of-trainer model that provides classes on math and science activities for parents and children to learn together and use at home.	A two-day training program for workshop leaders. Eight highly structured and practical workshops to teach parents skills and activities to use with their children.	Development of two-year parent involvement action plan. Teacher and parent training to implement components of plan. On-site technical assistance.
RESOURCES PROVIDED	Program provides computer equipment, technical installation and expertise, and training of school personnel for setup.	Written curriculum materials and training provided to parent leaders, who in turn instruct other parents.	Instructional training, materials, and resource guides available to parents, school staff, and community agency, who then train other parents.	Parents, teachers, community agency staff trained to conduct workshops for other parents. Workshop materials provided.	Assessment process, school personnel training, resource materials, and technical assistance provided by school districts.

TABLE 2. Characteristics of Five Programs Involving Parents in Their Children's Education *(continued)*

Characteristics	Transparent School Model	Family Study Institute	Family Math and Science Programs	Megaskills Program	Quality Education Project
FUNDING	Various financial support from local public funds, parent-teacher groups, businesses, and foundations.	Originally funded by the Joyce Foundation.. Schools purchase the curricula and sponsor the courses, often with funding from local foundations and businesses.	Development funds for Family Math provided by U.S. Department of Education. Development of Family Science funded by Chevron Corporation.	MacArthur Foundation, other foundations, and private sources.	Carnegie Corporation and local foundations funded initial projects. Subsequent support by U.S. Department of Education, California School Improvement Program, and other organizations.
EVALUATION	Evaluation conducted to determine increase in parent-initiated contacts with school after program installation. One school reported 1,000 calls in one week. Teachers report increased homework completion and improved parent attitudes. No difference found in usage by socioeconomic level.	Study conducted by University of Chicago addressing the quality of program implementation and the relationship of parent attitudes and behavior to student achievement. Evaluation included comparison study of students which indicated improvement on achievement test scores of children of participating parents.	Extensive independent evaluations on both programs using interviews, observation, and surveys to determine conceptual learning, home implementation, and attitude changes.	Several independent studies conducted of parent participants that show increased understanding of role in children's education, increased time spent with children on schoolwork, and changes in children's school performance.	Annual comparison of student achievement scores before and after implementation of parent involvement activities. Conducting longitudinal study of student attendance, retention, discipline; staff skills; parent attitudes and support for education.

Program Characteristics

These five programs all stress the necessity of improving the academic performance of low-income and minority students by involving the parents of these children in the educational process. Some of these programs also seek to improve the skills and capacities of parents and in some instances of community adults who work with children and their families. While the TransParent School Model focuses only on developing better home-school communication, the other programs also help teachers and school administrators collaborate with parents as partners in the education process. Two of the programs were developed at universities: the TransParent School Model at Vanderbilt University; and the Family Math Program at the University of California at Berkeley (and Family Science Program at Portland State). Nonprofit organizations created three programs: two of these, the Family Study Institute and the Megaskills Program, provide specific skills, training, and materials through workshops and courses to involve parents directly in their children's learning. QEP, by contrast, works toward systemic change in schools through teacher training, parent education, and new policies and practices to involve parents in the educational process and improve school outcomes.

All five programs have clear potential for broad expansion, although QEP, which has the greatest potential for institutional change, depends on school district leadership for implementation. QEP is currently operating in California, Mississippi, and Indiana. The Family Study Institute courses, the Family Math and Science Programs, and the Megaskills workshops are now functioning in multiple locations in at least 20 states. There are currently 36 technology-based TransParent School Models; expansion of this project may be somewhat limited by the initial financial investment required for equipment.

The Family Study Institute program offers two parent education courses focusing on skills development: Reading at Home and Studying at Home. Course content is based on research findings that describe the elements in the home environment and the types of parent involvement associated with children's improved academic performance. The program helps parents acquire the skills necessary to help their children; it also trains parents to serve as course leaders to train other parents. Enrollment in each course is determined by school personnel to target services to parents of children most in need of academic assistance. Each course meets once a week for three weeks. Between sessions, parents are encouraged to use program techniques at home with their children. Child care, certificates of completion, and other incentives are provided to recruit and retain participants. Courses are deliberately sited in schools to strengthen the interaction between home and school.

The Family Math and Science Programs also prepare parents as trainers of other parents, although school personnel and volunteers from churches and community organizations can also serve as trainers. The programs provide parents and community leaders with the information and techniques to work with children on math and science activities on a daily basis at home or at community sites.

These projects also create new, appropriate, and inexpensive math and science materials to reinforce the science and math taught at school. The teaching approach emphasizes the development of problem-solving skills, cooperative learning, understanding of math and science concepts and their practical applications, and the role of math and science in children's future education. Instructional style in the parent education component is informal, supportive, and based on active learning principles, and models the parents' role in working with their children.

Similarly, **the Megaskills Program** offers parent education workshops in which parents, teachers, and other community adults learn to train others. Megaskills workshops teach home learning activities to develop skills and attitudes that research has associated with long-term student success in school: self-confidence, responsibility, motivation, teamwork, and problem-solving. The program provides parents with skills and techniques for using home experience to reinforce and extend school-based learning.

The TransParent School Model focuses more on encouraging overall parent involvement in children's education and school activities than on specific skills acquisition. It uses technology to enhance two-way communication between parents and schools. Teachers and school administrators record messages about homework and classroom and school events, which parents can receive simply by dialing the school. Specific messages can be targeted to individual parents or groups of parents, and parents can record their responses.

QEP provides training and services to both parents and school personnel to attract family support for schools by improving home-school communication; improve parenting skills by encouraging parents to interact more positively with their children; and improve children's academic performance by enabling parents to reinforce at home the skills being taught at school.

This project is the most comprehensive of the five programs reviewed in this chapter, developing and implementing a two-year action plan designed to meet each school's specific needs. Action plans are based on assessments of the existing level

and quality of parent involvement and student academic performance in each school; planning teams composed of school personnel and parents are selected to develop and implement the action plans. Strategies incorporated in the action plans include parent-teacher conferences, parent education classes and workshops, newsletters, homework monitoring systems, teacher training, development of resource materials for home-based instruction, and community involvement activities.

All of the programs profiled here use school-based facilities and professional staff. Three of them – the TransParent School Model, the Family Study Institute program, and the QEP – are primarily school-based. The Family Math and Science Programs and Megaskills bring broader community resources into collaboration with schools; these programs expand their delivery systems to reach low-income and minority families who may be more directly connected to community agencies and churches than to schools.

Four of the five programs received initial funding from foundations and corporations; the exception, the Family Math Program, received support during its development phase from the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. The private sector supports the maintenance and expansion of all five programs; additional support comes from state and local school budgets.

These five programs include internal evaluation components; most have also been assessed by external evaluators. The TransParent School Model assessed program impact on parent-school interaction in its first elementary and middle school pilot sites. Parent-initiated contacts with teachers averaged about 10 per day per school prior to the inception of the program. After the program began, the number of parent calls increased to an average of 63 per day. In one pilot school, there were more than 1,000 calls from home to teachers in one week. Approximately one-third of all parents used the system daily.

The evaluation also indicated that when parents used the telephone system frequently, teachers reported a significant increase in homework completion rates. Among parents who used the system regularly, almost 93 percent reported improvements in their children's attitudes and skills. Evaluation showed that low-income parents used the TransParent School Model at the same rate as middle-income parents.

Researchers at the University of Chicago evaluated the Family Study Institute program, focusing on outcomes such as increases in student achievement and changes in parent attitudes

and behaviors. Comparison of the academic performance of participants with the performance of a matched group of nonparticipants indicated an improvement in achievement test scores of participants and positive changes in parent attitudes and behaviors. In a phone survey of parents conducted six months after program completion, 85 percent of participants reported continued use of program techniques with their children.

Extensive evaluations of the Family Math Program have assessed extent of family involvement, mastery of selected math concepts, and the utilization of home-based learning. These studies indicate that more than 80 percent of program parents engage in more home learning activities with their children. An assessment of ten Family Science Program pilot sites is now under way. The evaluation includes a survey of 400 parents and children, covering attitudes about science; observations and interviews with students and parents; and classroom evaluations to determine changes in attitudes, subject matter knowledge, and use of materials and techniques. Preliminary results show that almost all parents acquired specific science knowledge; moreover, 20 percent of the students increased their awareness of science careers, and 88 percent reported enjoying science classes.

The Megaskills Program has also undergone independent evaluation. Reports from two studies, as well as information collected from workshop leaders and participants, indicate that the program attracts parents from diverse income levels and ethnic backgrounds. Three-fourths of all enrolled parents completed the program, and 98 percent increased the amount of time they spent with their children. Parents also reported increased understanding of how to effectively support their children's education as well as positive changes in their children's school behavior and academic performance.

QEP conducts annual comparisons of achievement test scores of participating students before and after implementation of its parent involvement plan. QEP's evaluation assesses the extent of parent participation and its possible relationship to increases in student academic achievement. Results indicate that the program has realized substantial average gains in student achievement on standardized tests. Since the 1989-90 school year, QEP's evaluations have compared program participants with control groups exhibiting similar demographics and preprogram test scores. QEP has also sponsored a longitudinal study in participating districts to examine student attendance patterns, school completion rates, discipline, staff skills, parent participation in and support for school activities, and family attitudes about school.

Assumptions about Student Need, School Improvement, and Parent Involvement

The programs described in this chapter implement the findings from a growing body of research on how to improve the educational achievement of low-income children, particularly minority and urban youth. Although these programs have different components, they share several fundamental perspectives. The first and most basic tenet is that parents are children's first teachers and have a lifelong influence on children's values, attitudes, and aspirations.

The second tenet these programs share is that children's educational success requires congruence between what is taught at school and the values expressed in the home. Although the research data are often implicit, they do suggest that mismatches between home and school cultures cause problems for children at school. Family-school partnerships that articulate common goals and expectations and help information flow freely and regularly between parents and teachers can narrow these gaps between home and school. All these programs seek to build such partnerships.

The second tenet these programs share is that children's educational success requires congruence between what is taught at school and the values expressed in the home.

The TransParent School Model creates an information-sharing system. The Family Study Institute and Megaskills programs build partnerships by offering parents detailed instruction to reinforce children's in-school learning. The courses developed by the Family Study Institute program make this assumption:

> *A mother lode of academic attainment lies beneath the surface of school-parent-child interactions. Parent education is one component in building a school community. Parent education must be set in the context of the school community's values and goals and go hand-in-hand with teacher education. Parents need not only to be involved in their children's education, but become full partners in determining the goals of that education. This is the direction in which parent involvement and parent education must proceed.* (Academic Development Institute 1990, p. 3)

The Family Math and Science Programs help parents help their children learn, and also engage other community institutions in program delivery to help children see education as an integral part of their life experience. A review of the history of these programs indicates that including community organizations is an effective strategy to reach low-income and minority families, particularly those hardest to reach because of poverty, remoteness or previous discrimination. (Thompson, no date)

The Megaskills Program also sees family-school partnerships as strengthening the complementary roles of parents

When schools view parents as integral to the learning process, parents convey a sense of this empowerment to their children and help them become more involved, responsible, and committed students.

and educators, and stresses home support for schools as complementary to large-scale restructuring.

A third assumption undergirding these programs is that most parents, regardless of their economic status, educational level, or cultural background, care deeply about their children's education and can provide substantial support if given specific opportunities and knowledge. Some of these programs provide necessary training and create structured support roles for parents. In the Megaskills, Family Study Institute, and Family Math and Science programs, parents get the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to become not only teachers of their own children but also trainers of other parents and community volunteers. The TransParent School Model provides information about school activities that parents can use to structure their own involvement. All five programs help parents influence the educational process by reinforcing the learning that takes place in school, by expanding this learning at home, and sometimes, as in QEP, by influencing the structures and procedures of the schools themselves.

When schools view parents as integral to the learning process, parents convey a sense of this empowerment to their children and help them become more involved, responsible, and committed students. The Family Math and Science programs make explicit reference to the need to empower parents:

> *Participation in classes helps increase parents' self-confidence and places them in leadership roles, often for the first time. As Family Math and Science instructors, they are also models for other parents and for their own children. Within the context of the programs' focus on practical knowledge, common sense, and logical thinking, teachers often come to respect the non-school "smarts" of many parents. As parents gained self-confidence about their own abilities, they were able to communicate on a more equal level with professional teachers.* (Thompson & Kreinberg, no date)

A fourth tenet of these programs is that schools must take the lead in eliminating, or at least reducing, traditional barriers to parent involvement. Conflicting work schedules, difficulty in communicating in English, negative school experiences during their own youth, and lack of knowledge about specific ways to help their children all work against parents' involvement in the educational process.

All of these programs seek to change traditional school practices to confront and reduce barriers to involvement.

QEP makes this assumption an explicit goal:

> ***In order to empower all children to lead more productive lives, it is necessary to expand the concept of parent participation beyond volunteer activities at the school site. Schools must learn to involve parents they have traditionally overlooked – those who must parent alone, work full-time outside the home, are impoverished, have limited English proficiency, are recent immigrants, or who have experienced school failure themselves – in strategies to reduce the enormous risks faced by their children. Schools can teach families how to include activities which encourage and support learning in the often very limited hours they share together at home.*** (QEP Information Document 1991, p. 1)

All of these programs seek to change traditional school practices to confront and reduce barriers to involvement. The TransParent School Model allows convenient access to information without placing additional burdens on teacher or parent schedules. Parents are not required to interrupt work or travel to the school site. Telecommunications technology enables the school to engage all segments of the parent population in the educational process. Program results offer a response to the criticisms of those school personnel who equate parents' lack of participation in school activities with a lack of interest in their children's education.

> ***This is an unfair inference to make, and it is hardly useful in forging strategies that will involve more of the "seldom-involved" families in the education of their children. Many strategies are highly personnel intensive, geared to particular segments of the parent population, and many are decidedly under-used by parents.*** (Bauch 1990, p. 25)

In addition, the TransParent Program bases its strategies on this assumption:

> ***The instructional and organizational demands on teachers are very high, and there are no provisions for the additional time and effort necessary to interact with parents using traditional methods. Parents and families are also under pressure from changing structure, economic demands, social and geographic distance from the schools, and reduced information and commitment to participate in school activities. Since time and opportunity are part of the barrier to frequent communication, telecommunications technology can influence home/school interaction, and has demonstrated that parents will access information on a daily basis given the***

means. It recognizes that the telephone is a powerful tool for the efficient exchange of information. (White 1991, p. 2)

As the number and variety of parent groups using the services demonstrate, the TransParent School Model shows that when parents have appropriate mechanisms at their disposal, they will seek to obtain information about their children's education on a regular basis, use this information to help their children learn, and by doing so, help improve their children's performance in school.

QEP also aims to restructure the school environment to improve home-school communication, build family support for children's learning, and support the development of self-confidence in both parents and children. The project's processes encourage schools to transcend their reluctance to trust parents and to reach out and involve constituencies previously little involved in school affairs.

These programs assume that to succeed in school, all students need:

- To live and study in home and school environments that share values and expectations;
- To understand that their parents can influence their schools and the other important institutions that affect their lives;
- To know that their schools value their parent inputs, interests, strengths, and knowledge;
- To see their parents in leadership roles not only as home educators of their own children but also as mentors and tutors of others.

These programs offer parents information, knowledge, skills, and specific roles to play; in some instances, they encourage parents to structure their own roles in the education of their children. All of these programs are demonstrating effective strategies for improving the educational achievement of children, particularly those poor and disadvantaged children American schooling has traditionally underserved.

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Chapter 4:

School Improvement Programs

The school improvement programs profiled in this chapter developed from the effective schools research movement of the 1970s and subsequent efforts to implement the findings of that research in school districts throughout the country. Effective schools research attacked the conviction that "schools can't make a difference" to low student academic achievement supposedly caused by family background. To counter this position, researchers identified schools serving poor and minority students that produced superior academic results and analyzed the characteristics of these effective schools that seemed to correlate with academic success. Implementation projects then attempted to use these correlates of effectiveness to assess and improve ineffective schools.

Parent involvement was originally not one of the correlates of effectiveness. Ronald Edmonds, perhaps the most influential effective schools researcher, identified and popularized five factors critical to school effectiveness: strong leadership, unified vision, high expectations, instruction tied to assessment, and a positive school climate. Edmonds initially discounted parent involvement because his research did not identify it as one of the stronger factors associated with school effectiveness. He also argued that including parent involvement risked reducing schools' responsibility to educate all children. Since Edmonds perceived parent involvement as essentially beyond the control of schools, his opposition to defining it as a critical factor was an effort to focus effective schools research, and practice, on those factors schooling could affect. (Edmonds 1979)

Debate about the relative importance of parent involvement intensified as the influence of effective schools research spread. But as school improvement projects attempted to apply research results to ineffective schools, the debate was resolved in practice by the inclusion of parents. Most projects based on effective schools research developed a cycle of needs assessment, planning, and implementation to generate school improvement and created school-based teams to carry out these processes. Parents were included on most of these teams to ensure support from all of the school's constituencies in the improvement effort.

Yet, such school improvement programs often included parents in symbolic, arbitrary, and limited ways. Though state legislatures (for example, in California and Florida) or large city school districts (for example, in Milwaukee, Chicago, New York, and Detroit) mandated programs, formal processes for selecting parent representation were seldom developed. Instead, parents included on school improvement teams were frequently selected by administrators; were rarely chosen by the school's parent body;

and were often significantly outnumbered, manipulated, and intimidated by the school staff. Parent presence, therefore, often produced only passive assent to, rather than active participation in, team decision-making. (Kelley 1988)

Nevertheless, the school improvement programs that developed from effective schools research are the precursors of the programs profiled here. Those efforts contributed the following emphases to current programs:

... the school improvement programs that developed from effective schools research are the precursors of the programs profiled here.

- A focus on ineffective schools serving poor minority students as the critical targets for school improvement efforts;
- An insistence that all students can learn and that excuses for schooling failure based on student background limitations are unacceptable;
- An understanding that the whole school, seen as an ensemble within which a range of critical factors interlock to encourage or depress student achievement, must be the target for change;
- An assumption that such change involves processes developing over time;
- An assumption that the entire school constituency, including parents, must be involved in these processes.

Perhaps the most significant change is that current programs define parents as critical participants.

Program Descriptions

The school improvement programs described below stress the necessity to involve parents in principal roles in school restructuring and improvement. The **School Development Program**, generated by James Comer and his colleagues at Yale University's Child Study Center, was initiated in New Haven in 1968 to improve academic achievement in two poorly performing city schools. For the past 24 years, Comer and his colleagues have been refining this comprehensive program to reduce the social and cultural distance between home, community, and school and to support children's social, as well as academic, development through the extensive participation of parents in both governance and developmental roles.

The Accelerated Schools Project, developed by Henry Levin and his colleagues at the Center for Education Research at

Stanford University, got under way in 1986 in two California elementary schools. Developed as an alternative to traditional forms of remediation, AS stresses the need to advance and enrich the education of disadvantaged students and sets as its overall goal the achievement of educational parity – grade-level performance – by those students upon graduation from elementary or middle school. The program emphasizes implementing, through collaborative processes, significant changes in each school's curriculum, instructional methods, and school organization. Parents play key roles through their participation on schoolwide governance teams and task-oriented subcommittees.

The League of Schools Reaching Out, developed by Don Davies and his colleagues at the Institute for Responsive Education at Boston University, began as a pilot project in a Boston and a New York City elementary school in 1987. The project's precursor was a three-city study (Boston, Liverpool, and Lisbon) of the relationship between public schools and low-income parent constituents. The study found strong parent commitment to supporting children's education, significant barriers to effective home/school communication and cooperation, and consistent failure to effectively educate all children when schools maintained such barriers. From this study came the League's commitment to develop strong partnerships among home, school, and community as a primary route to school improvement.

The Center for Collaborative Education is a New York City network of innovative schools; at its core is the group of Central Park East schools developed by Deborah Meier and her colleagues over the past two decades. These are staff-and parent-run public schools serving predominantly poor and minority students. School organization emphasizes choice, active learning, collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching, alternative assesement, multicultural curricula, and a focus on individualized instruction that strives to eliminate tracking and other discriminations among students. Parents play key roles on school governance teams that decide policy in all areas. The Center is the New York City affiliate of the Coalition of Essential Schools, developed by Ted Sizer and his colleagues at Brown University.

Table 3 summarizes the features of these programs.

TABLE 3. Characteristics of Four School Improvement Programs

Characteristics	School Development Program	Accelerated Schools	League of Schools Reaching Out	Center for Collaborative Education (Coalition of Essential Schools)
TARGET POPULATION	Poorly performing public schools serving poor, predominantly minority children.	Poorly performing public schools serving educationally at-risk or disadvantaged students.	Mostly public but some private schools. Mostly schools serving low-income students.	Public elementary, middle, and high school schools in New York City, serving predominantly low-income populations.
ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT	Developed by the Yale University Child Study Center (James Comer and colleagues). Initiated in two New Haven elementary schools in 1968. Continuous development in New Haven and other districts since.	Developed by Center for Education Research at Stanford University (Henry Levin and colleagues) and initiated in 1986 at San Francisco and Redwood City, California elementary schools.	Initiated by the Institute for Responsive Education (Don Davies, director) at Boston University, 1990. Developed from pilot project, Schools Reaching Out, 1987-89.	Umbrella organization for staff- and parent-initiated public schools; initial school started by Deborah Meier in 1978. Organization is consortium of school directors, staff, and parents founded in 1987.
SCOPE	Initially, New Haven schools, subsequently, Benton Harbor, Michigan, and Prince Georges County, Maryland, school systems. Training programs initiated in 1991 to expand to many more school systems.	Initially, two California schools, now many schools nationwide. Satellite centers in universities in San Francisco, Houston, New Orleans, Seattle, and Los Angeles to provide facilitation and support. State programs in Missouri (10 elementary schools), California (15), and Illinois (25).	In 1990, 40 urban public schools. In 1991, 70 public (including rural) and private schools, including some clusters of urban public schools.	15 New York City public schools (6 elementary, 2 middle, and 7 high schools) are full members. Several other public schools are exploring membership. The Center is also the New York City affiliate of the Coalition of Essential Schools.
GOALS	Improve academic performance and school success of poor minority students. Build parent-staff collaborations to develop trust and reduce the sociocultural gap between home and school. Use developmental principles to improve schools' responsiveness to children's needs.	Improve the academic performance of disadvantaged students by acceleration rather than remediation. Eliminate the achievement gap through interventions that significantly reorder curriculum, instruction, and organization through collaborative efforts of the school community.	Develop partnerships among families, schools, and communities to improve schools. Through these family-school-community collaborations, develop interventions to ensure that all students, particularly low-income students, achieve academic success.	Help young people learn to use their minds well. The Center seeks to develop student-centered schools that stress active learning for all students, and school communities characterized by diversity, school-family partnerships, and shared decision-making by staff and families. It also works to help transform other schools using the accomplishments of its member schools.

TABLE 3. Characteristics of Four School Improvement Programs (continued)

Characteristics	School Development Program	Accelerated Schools	League of Schools Reaching Out	Center for Collaborative Education (Coalition of Essential Schools)
COMPONENTS	Governance and management team including parents, teachers, administration, and support staff. Mental health team involving guidance and support staff, focusing on children's developmental needs. Parent program stressing continuum of activities from school support to governance roles.	Interventions, developed by collaborative processes, stress unity of purpose, empowerment, and building strengths. Five-stage implementation process involving assessment, articulating a vision, developing an action plan, working through a shared governance system, and implementing a collaborative inquiry process.	Overall strategy stresses core ideology that all children can learn; strong buy-in from participating schools; action plan with three key components: (parent center, parent outreach workers, teacher research team); on-site help from facilitators; national recognition and visibility; discretionary funding through external (nondistrict) grants; loving critics.	Principles for student-centered schools: vision; high academic standards for all students; focused curriculum ("less is more"); small size and scale; student as worker and student as citizen; authentic assessment; school tone stressing values of expectations and decency; family input; shared decision-making; diversity; choice; regular budget, including planning for staff.
RESOURCES PROVIDED	Originally, project director, support staff, and planning time. Currently, a teacher preparation curriculum, training for school staffs, training and support materials	Facilitators from Satellite Centers help schools implement program. Some funding to schools through external grants. Some incremental district support to schools.	Facilitators in some participating schools. Grants to some schools. Information newsletters, resource guides, and directories of participating schools. Networking, conferences, and connections or referrals to other reform efforts.	Tours, conferences, publications focused on accomplishments of member schools. Intervisitations, institutes, workshops, residencies, and technical assistance so schools learn from each other. School reform projects, newsletters, conferences, and networking to advance school restructuring nationally.
FUNDING	Originally, major foundations, US Department of Education, National Institute of Mental Health, and Yale University. Currently, major foundations, state and local district support.	Foundations; Stanford University; and state education departments in Missouri, Illinois, California, Connecticut, and other states.	Foundations; U.S. Department of Education grant to Center on Families, Schools, Communities, and Children's Learning for research and evaluation.	Foundations.
EVALUATION	Comparative longitudinal evaluations for New Haven and Benton Harbor participating schools, based on standardized test scores, and indices of attendance, suspensions, corporal punishment. Results indicate clear gains in participating schools.	Initial comparative evaluations for standardized test scores and attendance outcomes indicate impressive gains. Comprehensive evaluations being conducted by Chapter I Research and Technical Assistance Center, University of Kansas; Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress.	Extensive ethnographic reports and analysis of pilot project. Extensive evaluation planned through the National Center For Families, Schools, Communities and Childrens' Learning.	Longitudinal studies of individual schools, using ethnographic methods and analysis of outcome data. Documentation of innovative school practices and study of accountability processes by Center for School Reform, Teachers College. Comprehensive longitudinal study of school outcomes.

Program Characteristics

... the programs profiled here were initiated and implemented by university-based scholar-activists working as external collaborators with individual schools and school systems.

These four programs target similar populations: public schools (predominantly elementary) serving low-income and minority students. But their origins and development differ significantly from those of the previous generation of school improvement efforts. Past school improvement programs were primarily developed and implemented by school personnel, usually district (though sometimes state) administrators. The programs were too often bureaucratized efforts to generate "effectiveness factors" in failing schools, often characterized as recipe-driven because they tended to ignore individual school culture and organization, sometimes bore little relationship to the original effective schools research, and in too many instances degenerated into districtwide compliance rituals.

In contrast, the programs profiled here were initiated and implemented by university-based scholar-activists working as external collaborators with individual schools and school systems. These initiators generated the visibility, clout, and funding necessary to negotiate local implementation. Such external origins are important because these programs are based on goals (such as comprehensive parent involvement) that school systems often affirm in rhetoric but deny in practice. The role of outside intervention in initiating these programs has legitimated and maintained emphasis on goals such as genuine parent participation, thereby countering systemic tendencies to marginalize parents and dilute or sanitize other controversial or challenging components. Outside intervention can also provide leverage to oppose predictable bureaucratic responses that often strangle reform efforts. It is difficult to resolve the tensions that large-scale interventions create as they struggle with the bureaucratized accountability structures that characterize public education (and most public-sector services). Still, the external origins, independent development, and national prominence of these programs give them clear advantages over the internal system-initiated efforts of previous school improvement efforts.

Program scope is an important characteristic because ultimate success depends on working with schools in diverse settings. Previous school improvement projects were usually implemented in single districts and were often idiosyncratic in structure, thereby making evaluation or comparison across districts extremely difficult. These programs, in contrast, are all quite large in scope; the smallest, the Center for Collaborative Education's network, is intensively involved with 15 schools and is working closely with at least 30 others. Except for the Center's participants, these programs' schools are located throughout the country and serve differing (though similarly disadvantaged) student and parent constituencies. Moreover, all have expanded considerably from their original sites.

Their goals, at core, are the same: to improve the academic performance of disadvantaged students in participating schools, thereby demonstrating that both their program components (including significant parent involvement) and their implementation processes offer important routes to school improvement. Given their scope, these programs should be viewed as demonstration efforts aimed at national audiences of educators, policy-makers, and legislators. What they hope to show is how to create the change required to help disadvantaged students reach their full learning potentials.

Each of these programs has developed a variety of components, including parent involvement mechanisms, to bring about the school restructuring and academic improvement they seek. **The School Development Program** stresses a collaborative process with highly developed components linking families and schools. The program has three core components:

- A governance team composed of staff, parents, and administrators, who manage the school improvement plan;
- A mental health team composed of the guidance counselor, social worker, and support staff, who serve individual students and help base school change on children's developmental needs;
- A parent program based on a continuum of activities encompassing school support, classroom assistance, and governance.

The roles, functions, and responsibilities of each component have been developed and refined through years of program experience.

Accelerated Schools posits a process to initiate acceleration that involves five stages:

- Establishing a vision;
- Assessing the gap between that vision and the school's reality;
- Establishing priorities to actualize the vision;
- Developing a shared governance system, including a steering committee to coordinate improvement efforts, a series of task forces focused on priorities, and other mechanisms to allow the school as a whole to meet;

- Developing a collaborative inquiry process that structures each group's work.

Accelerated Schools focuses on the inquiry process (for example, identifying problems, formulating solutions, developing and pilot-testing an action plan, and evaluating the results) as the key to successful implementation. The steering committee and the task forces, all involving parents, are also critical components, along with facilitators provided by Satellite Centers, university-based resource units usually located in an education department. Accelerated Schools also provides a full menu of curriculum, classroom, and school organization methods to encourage and support restructuring.

The **League for Schools Reaching Out** and the **Center for Collaborative Education** depend more on developing participating schools' commitment to the principles of each program than to a specific set of change strategies. Both the Center and the Coalition of Essential Schools, of which it is a member, define a formal set of principles that each school must vote to accept before becoming a participant member as well as a process of implementing those principles that advances through three stages: exploratory, networking, and implementation. The process for joining the League is less formal and depends more on individual school initiative. Both programs attempt to provide the support and assistance schools need to restructure themselves.

On the basis of its two-city pilot effort, the League recommends that each participating school develop a parent center, a parent outreach program using activist parents as outreach workers, and a teacher research team that investigates strategies for increasing parent involvement. The Center offers each affiliated school a wide range of assistance, intervisitations, research support, and collaborative investigation, including participation in the Coalition's Trek process, a yearlong staff development effort centered on an intensive summer training session designed to help a school's core team plan and manage change.

The School Development Program and Accelerated Schools, as well as the League and the Center, provide some form of facilitation, training, support, and assistance to their participating schools. All four programs receive funding from major foundations, and three of the four obtain significant funding from federal and state education sources. Finally, all have developed extensive evaluation designs; in three of the four programs, external evaluators have carried these out.

Outcomes in School Development Program schools have been extensively evaluated in New Haven; Prince Georges County, Maryland; and Benton Harbor, Michigan. Academic achievement, as measured by standardized test scores, showed substantial increases, and school climate indices such as suspensions, absenteeism, and corporal punishment showed equally substantial declines. Several national efforts are evaluating outcomes in Accelerated Schools; reports from two of the earliest participating schools indicate dramatic gains in test score performance as well as significant reduction in student mobility, vandalism, and other school climate indicators. Both Accelerated Schools and the Center stress the necessity of school-based assessment responsive to the complexity of educational goals such as "learning to use one's mind well." The Center is developing models of alternative assessment processes and helping member schools carry out extensive longitudinal studies of student progress. Moreover, the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST) is developing and documenting comprehensive assessment processes for the Center's schools. The League is less involved in evaluating school outcomes; instead, it has surveyed its member schools to detail and disseminate information on the nature of parent involvement and community partnership activities, as well as the policies that support those activities in each school.

Assumptions about Student Needs and School Culture

... all four programs stress the necessity for parent involvement to reduce the gap between traditional schooling and student potential.

These programs define a set of student needs that schools must be restructured to meet. Many of those needs stem from the lack of fit between mainstream schooling and student capacity and potential. Each program defines that lack of fit differently; some emphasize the cultural mismatch, others stress schooling's organizational and instructional limitations. Whatever the definition of disparity, all four programs stress the necessity for parent involvement to reduce the gap between traditional schooling and student potential.

The School Development Program defines significant differences in the socialization experiences of mainstream and minority children as limiting minority children's readiness for school and their subsequent schooling success. Comer argues that family assumptions and supports prepare mainstream children for successful school experience:

> *Those children who are provided with a good developmental experience prior to school, whose parents' attitudes, values and ways are similar to those of the school, and whose parents make a conscious effort to support the activities of the school are the children most likely to succeed in school.* (Comer 1988, p.37)

Therefore, the gap between home and school, in Comer's terms, is minimal when such symmetry exists, and the children of families aligned with mainstream schooling values arrive at school as beneficiaries of family-generated social, psychological, emotional, moral, linguistic, and cognitive experiences that provide a necessary base for successful learning. Minority children, Comer argues, often do not experience such school-supportive family socialization:

> *a disproportionate number of the children who will not do well in school are from low-income families, families under excessive stress, or families with lifestyles very different from the expectations of the school. And a disproportionate number of these families are from the minority groups that have had the most traumatic experiences in this country – Native Americans, Hispanics and Blacks. These groups differ from others in that they have experienced the most cultural discontinuity and destruction of their organizing and stabilizing institutions and practices, as well as forced exclusion from education and other developmental opportunities.* (Comer 1988, p. 37)

Consequently, minority children often arrive at formal schooling with *"underdevelopment or simply development that was appropriate to the playground, at home or other places outside of school, but inappropriate in school"* (Comer 1988, p. 1).

> *A child from a poor, marginal family, in contrast, is likely to enter school without adequate preparation. The child may arrive without ever having learned such social skills as negotiation and compromise. A child who is expected to read at school may come from a home where no one reads and may never have heard a parent read bedtime stories. The child's language skills may be underdeveloped or non-standard. Expectations at home and at school may be radically at odds. For example, in some families a child who does not fight back will be punished. And yet the same behavior will get the child into trouble at school.* (Comer, 1988 p. 45)

... for Comer, parent participation becomes the critical component for restoring school and community trust and for providing the developmental experiences necessary to prepare minority students for school success.

This underdevelopment or different development results, in Comer's perspective, in minority children's need for developmental experiences to help them meet the expectations of mainstream schooling. Comer believes that schools must provide these developmental experiences, and must undergo considerable restructuring, through parent involvement, to provide them successfully. Schools must create staff-parent interactions that reduce the gaps caused by the differences between home and school, and through this supportive climate, create staff-student

relationships that produce positive developmental experiences for minority students. Thus, for Comer, parent participation becomes the critical component for restoring school and community trust and for providing the developmental experiences necessary to prepare minority students for school success.

Accelerated Schools takes the following stance on the definition of its target population's need:

> *The definition of at-risk students is one that suggests that they are caught in a mismatch between the opportunities for educational and social development in the home and the expectations of schools as they are presently constituted. Home conditions that contribute to being educationally at risk include poverty, low educational attainments of parents, single-parent families and non-English speaking families. These conditions restrict the opportunities and experiences that contribute to educational success. Among these conditions is the lack of access to adequate nutrition and health care, to early educational opportunities, and to the types of educational interactions in the home that prepare children for the standard school curriculum. The school exacerbates these deficiencies by responding with a school experience that builds on the weaknesses of these students rather than on their strengths and that slows, rather than accelerates, their progress.* (Levin 1990, p. 284)

Accelerated Schools argues that this mismatch between limited home opportunities and mainstream school expectations is exacerbated when schools identify, assign, and then maroon disadvantaged students in remedial tracks. Levin presents a devastating analysis of the failures of remediation, arguing that effective education for disadvantaged students must build on their strengths and so challenge and stimulate them that they reach parity with the academic performance of mainstream students.

Levin's formulations consistently stress the strengths of parents and students outside the narrow parameters that traditional schooling identifies and rewards...

To implement such education, Levin posits three underlying principles: unity of purpose, empowerment with responsibility, and building on strengths. Unity of purpose involves agreement among parents, teachers, and students, about a set of school goals. Empowerment involves the need for all school constituencies to participate in decision-making at the school level; thus *school-based management and shared decision-making* represent one of the core components of Accelerated Schools' programs. Building on strengths defines the commitment to base Accelerated Schools' programs on the capacities and potentials of students and parents rather than focus on their supposed deficits.

Levin's formulations consistently stress the strengths of parents and students outside the narrow parameters that traditional schooling identifies and rewards as well as the limitations and rigidities of schooling that lock students into disadvantage. Therefore, Levin's work focuses on the strengths that disadvantaged students and their families can contribute to accelerated learning as well as the necessity for restructuring schools to build on those strengths. He defines parents as key governance participants in restructuring processes that reshape the school's curriculum, instruction, and organization to produce accelerated learning.

Because the **League of Schools Reaching Out** is committed to partnerships among families, schools, and communities to improve students' academic performance, it views parents as sources of strength and support rather than as deficits. When the League cites family inability to support children's learning, the context is always economic pressure or historical or social change processes that isolate or limit families:

The League defines school failure as a pervasive structural problem requiring comprehensive solutions...

> ***The new definitions of parent involvement in urban schools replace the old deficit views of the pathologies, traumas, and troubles of urban families and communities with a new mindset that emphasizes the inherent strengths of families. Improving the capacity of urban families to foster the social and academic growth of their children means building on the strengths of these families and of their diverse, multicultural communities. Cultural differences are not diseases to be treated but healthy opportunities for learning.*** (Davies 1991, p. 378)

The League posits no specific analysis of cultural or academic mismatch requiring specific school restructuring. Instead, it defines school failure as a pervasive structural problem requiring comprehensive solutions:

> ***a system that permits hundreds of thousands of children to fail – children of color, children who are poor and from socially marginal families both urban and rural, children whose families are immigrants or whose primary language is not English, children with disabilities – such a system is fundamentally flawed and a problem for us all. Schools, families, communities, organizations and agencies (including government, businesses and financial institutions, churches, civic organizations, community organizations, post-secondary educational institutions) are all part of the problem – the social and academic failure of from one quarter to one half of all children in the United States and the staggering social and economic problems of poor families and communities***

[require] an ecological solution to an ecological disaster. (Davies 1991, p. 5)

Thus, the failure to educate all of our children is systemic and ecological, indicting (and, one would hope, engaging) all our institutions. Yet, this systemic view may result in a generalized notion of the forms of parent and community involvement necessary to transform schools. Although one component of the League's program recommends a school action plan that includes a parent center, parent outreach visitors providing home support for schooling, and teacher teams researching improvements in parent involvement, the other components are broadly defined: ideology, felt need, plan of action, on-site help, recognition and visibility, discretionary money, research and evaluation, loving critics. How family and community partnerships might use these components to restructure schools is not clearly defined.

This tension between generalized goals and the quest for specific school reform may stem from the nature of the League's effort as *"a national network and reform strategy and a collection of individual schools implementing their own plans for increasing student success through family-community-school collaboration"* (Davies 1991, p. 15). Given the voluntary nature of school participation, the League seems to have chosen not to issue specific strategies to create family-community-school collaboration among its member schools. Nor does the League recommend specific forms of family and community participation in school restructuring, as the other programs do. Instead, the necessity for intensive collaboration in schooling is defined as a general principle of all the League's efforts.

The Center emphasizes the role of families as powerful contributors to restructuring schooling when schools develop the will, capacity, and outreach mechanisms to involve parents effectively.

Embedded in the practice of the **Center for Collaborative Education's** member schools are primary assumptions about students' families and their role in making schooling work for students:

- Families are children's first and most important teachers.
- Families value their children's education and want schools to fully develop their children's learning capacities.
- Family participation is critical to developing school communities working to resolve ethnic, racial, and class tensions and integrate a new vision of curriculum and teaching that respects the diversity of students' backgrounds.
- Schools that aspire to "help young people learn to use their minds well" must develop ways to reach out to students'

families and overcome the barriers separating families and schools, particularly with families from cultures mainstream schooling habitually undervalues.

These assumptions structure school-family practice in the Center's schools and have led to a range of innovations:

- Shared decision-making involving parents in significant leadership roles;
- School-family conferences involving students, family, teachers, and social workers in structured efforts to resolve student problems;
- Prejudice-reduction workshops for parents, in which participants explore sources of conflict in school communities;
- A parent training program in school-based conflict resolution;
- Working groups involving parents and teachers in developing new forms of authentic assessment and schoolwide accountability.

The Center emphasizes the role of families as powerful contributors to restructuring schooling when schools develop the will, capacity, and outreach mechanisms to involve parents effectively. A parent's description of participation in Center-sponsored workshops about alternative assessment exemplifies this stress on parent potential. She describes her experiences with several observation-based assessment processes, defines how all parents are involved in assessing their children's progress, and concludes that parents:

> *need to know and recognize the important part we play in our children's education and then share it with teachers and administrators so they can get a better picture of the whole child and understand the true value of our children. Once we do that we can create a way that information can flow easily from home to school and back again. All this means we will be accepting the true value of ourselves as parents and educators.* (Velez 1991, p. 5)

This cycle of positing parents' potential, reaching out to include them in learning activities, and then engaging them in active forms of school partnership crystallizes the Center's practice of involving parents and families as the foundation of genuine school communities.

Parent Roles in School Restructuring

Over two decades of implementation, Comer's commitment to the necessity of involving parents in school improvement has not wavered.

The School Development Program defines parent participation as critical to the process of school transformation because engaged parents can bridge the gap between home culture and school culture. Because all parents want their children to succeed in school, Comer argues, they will be receptive to helping schools create the developmental supports their children need. Once parents are involved in school activities and school governance, the trust necessary to reduce the cultural gaps can be built.

> ***Through these activities students observed their parents – or people from the community who were very much like their parents – interacting in a cooperative way with teachers and other school staff members. Students often sought the approval, guidance, and support of the parent assistants in the building. And in a climate of good parent/teacher relationships, students were more responsive to the academic and behavioral expectations of the school staff. Parent assistants and teachers shared knowledge that enabled the parents to better support the academic, social and psychological growth of the students.*** (Comer 1986, p. 445)

Over two decades of implementation, Comer's commitment to the necessity of involving parents in school improvement has not wavered. A constant component of The School Development Program has been Comer's insistence that ***"parents are the first and most important models and teachers of their children,"*** and that to reduce the potentials for rebellion, alienation, or withdrawal from school culture, ***"the home, parents, and neighborhood and the teacher, school, and school program must not be at odds; this was our major motive for trying to bring low-income parents together with the largely middle-income public schools faculty"*** (Comer 1980, p. 126). In New Haven schools and other School Development Program settings, parent participation has included representation on school governance or steering committees; participation in school personnel decisions and other key policy matters; paid parent assistants; and extensive parent involvement in school activities, including the preparation and use of an instrument for classroom observation, "A Parent's Guide to Children's Learning." At one of the initial New Haven schools, Comer estimates that

> ***1 to 5 percent of the parents worked with the staff in making curriculum and operation policy determinations. The second level is where parents participated in the day-to-day life of the school. About 10 to 25 percent are involved here. The third was the broad-based activities of the school which involved 50 to 100 percent of the parents.*** (Comer 1980, p. 141)

In the initial formulations of **Accelerated Schools**, parents were assigned a number of important roles. First, parent participation was defined as a critical component of the school governance team. Second, parents were defined as an important home support for students' learning, through contracts obligating parents to enforce reasonable bedtimes, ensure punctuality and regular attendance, set high educational expectations, encourage daily reading, monitor homework, and maintain communication with the school. Next, parents were to receive training to help their children become successful students, and were to be "given opportunities to interact with the school program" (Levin 1987, p. 38).

Subsequent formulations expand this view of potentially supportive parents who need information, opportunities for participation, feasible activities, continuing communication, and training and other educational activities. Hiring parent coordinators to communicate with other parents is a principal recommendation, and examples of effective training are developed at some length. The parent contract and the supportive roles parents can provide to assist children's learning are reviewed.

This stress on active parent participation in a comprehensive set of roles, including governance, tends to diminish in descriptions of member schools implementing accelerated learning. Though parent participation in governance continues to be cited as a necessary component of change, specific parent roles are less frequently mentioned. Descriptions of accelerating schools tend to focus on teachers and administrators; parents are mentioned as attending PTA meetings and school events, or as playing school support roles, more than as members of the task forces, cadres, and committees involved in the inquiry processes seeking to transform schools.

It is quite difficult to sustain the participation of parents in interventions aimed at transforming school curricula, instruction, and organization.

It is quite difficult to sustain the participation of parents in interventions aimed at transforming school curricula, instruction, and organization. Inevitably, the school personnel involved will play critical, often dominating roles. But if the focus on school staffs as the primary institutional change agents reduces parent participation in restructuring, the extent of parent empowerment could become quite limited in accelerated learning efforts.

The League of Schools Reaching Out works to develop "a new social contract for children," by demonstrating, through the work of member schools,

> *the potential effectiveness of a comprehensive, ecological approach to restructuring in which school reform is directly*

linked to family support and education, neighborhood social and economic development, integrated services for poor children and their families, and multiple ways that families can contribute to the development and learning of their own children both in school and out. (Davies 1991, p. 6)

Involving parents is central to this effort. The League's survey of its member schools' practices indicates four areas of activity that, in Davies's judgment, *"seem to be especially promising"* (Davies 1991, p. 9):

- School-family collaboration in child-rearing and meeting basic family needs;
- In-school efforts to link families and schools and help families improve schools;
- Partnerships between schools and other community agencies;
- Involving parents and community members in school policy-making or in advocacy organizations working to change schools.

One indicator of success thus far is the wide variety of League member schools committed to extending partnerships and generating significant reform.

Davies's summary describes practice in specific member schools exemplifying each of these categories, and then reviews the League's eight-point strategy to move schools toward such practices. Yet, the eight points – the need for a clear ideology (all children can learn and achieve academic and social success), felt need (participants' commitment to change), a plan of action, on-site help, recognition and visibility, discretionary money, research and evaluation, and loving critics – seem more like process variables than strategy components.

The League is somewhat constrained in terms of developing more specific strategies, because its effort to organize a voluntary national network in which member schools develop their own plans for family and community collaboration requires balancing central direction with local support. One indicator of success thus far is the wide variety of League member schools committed to extending partnerships and promoting significant reform. Another is the stress on increasing parent participation all the League's member schools have incorporated into their programs.

How and to what extent teachers share school-based decision-making power with parents, and how to encourage such power-sharing as each member school evolves, are continuing struggles.

One of the **Center for Collaborative Education's** 12 essential principles stresses shared decision-making:

> *The people who implement policies should have maximum feasible decision-making power over their design. Therefore the internal life of such schools and learning communities must provide the teaching staff with power and responsibility to govern its own practices, select its own teacher-leaders and participate in all those decisions that affect their working/teaching success. This must include, however, collaboration between all those affected – particularly students and their families.* (Center for Collaborative Education 1990)

The original Center schools were teacher-organized and teacher-led, and the initiating stress on staff decision-making was a critical effort to lodge the capacity to shape education *at the school level and in the hands of teachers rather than administrators.* Struggles to maintain staff control of the Center's schools continue because schooling politics inevitably produces new challengers – administrators and school boards alike – seeking to transfer power away from teachers.

But this stress on staff empowerment can create conflict between staff and families. How and to what extent teachers share school-based decision-making power with parents, and how to encourage such power-sharing as each member school evolves, are continuing struggles. Some member schools were initiated by parents and have preserved strong parent participation. But even these schools have experienced conflicts between staff and families. Teacher-initiated Center schools have experienced particularly sharp conflicts as parents have demanded more participatory roles and challenged key elements of staff-evolved school practice.

> *I found myself oft times in conflicting roles as parent, mediator and advocate. Sometimes I was acting on behalf of my daughter, other times on behalf of the school. Parent meetings were the typical forums for discussing these issues. Attended by the students [at this high school], parents, teachers and administrators, discussions revolved around a central theme which, it seemed to me, boiled down to: Did the school know what it was doing, and would our children succeed once they left school? This ongoing debate manifested itself in the areas of curriculum, testing, the role of parents, learning styles, community service, graduation committees, advisories, and it goes on to this day.* (Davis 1991, p.4)

The role of parents in the governance of the Center's schools is a continuing arena of struggle in which teachers' needs to shape their working/teaching environments are counterbalanced by their assent to parent demands for meaningful participation in structuring effective school communities. But the underlying purpose of the Center's network, to develop and support forms of education that enrich and empower their students, embodies principles that make difficult the exclusion of parents and families from participation in the decisions that affect the education the Center's schools provide and the communities they develop.

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Chapter 5:

Governance Reforms

The major governance reforms profiled in this chapter originated in three movements – the community control struggles of the 1960s, the school-based management reforms of the 1970s, and more recent campaigns to reform state school finance systems.

Community control struggles developed from the civil rights movement's efforts to improve schooling for Black and Latino children. Community control advocates attacked educational bureaucracies in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and other major American cities as perpetrators of school failure and demanded governance changes to make public schools directly accountable to the parents and communities whose children used them. Their explicit demands were for ***decentralization*** of power – that is, both the dismantling of centralized bureaucracies and the relocation of decision-making authority to the school and community level.

... testing the limits of administrative decentralization has generated renewed demands for genuine decision-making power at school and community levels.

What resulted, particularly in New York City and Detroit, were forms of administrative decentralization that moved some decision-making power to neighborhood school boards, thereby, creating new arenas for political struggle. But these compromises reserved significant centralized power over fiscal allocation and control, personnel credentialing, hiring, and staff assignment as well as curriculum and staff development. The subsequent history of school politics in New York City, for example, has been a frustrating struggle, by parents and community activists against the forces of recentralization, increasing teacher union power, political interference, and local corruption, to make this limited form of decentralization work. This process of testing the limits of administrative decentralization has generated renewed demands for genuine decision-making power at school and community levels.

Among the initiators of the school-based management movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s were state legislatures concern to improve academic achievement, particularly in poor and minority districts. Facing the need to upgrade schooling, and focusing on major disparities in resource inputs and academic outcomes between white advantaged and minority disadvantaged districts, legislators in several states passed statutes decentralizing some decision-making to parents at the school level. Florida's legislature in 1973 enacted a tripartite program of funding equalization, decentralization of decision-making, and increased parent and citizen participation. Additional 1979 legislation granted allocations to the local school governance committees formed throughout the state in response to the 1973 program. Several counties, particularly Monroe in Key West, have developed comprehensive and innovative programs implementing these legislative mandates.

Two key state finance suits, Robinson v. Cahill in New Jersey and *Serrano v. Priest* in California, established state responsibility for school finance equity when state constitutions included appropriate equity language.

California's school-based management initiative introduced a limited form of decentralization – a school council to develop, carry out, and oversee state grant allocations for school improvement efforts. These councils included teachers, parents, and administrators; the enabling legislation required that they include equal numbers of school staff and parents. The state education department provided training for the councils as well as technical assistance and program monitoring. (Clark 1979; Marburger 1985)

Statewide school finance reform to reduce significant disparities in education expenditures per pupil, particularly in poor districts serving disadvantaged students, generated considerable foundation support during the 1970s. Two key state finance suits, ***Robinson v. Cahill*** in New Jersey and ***Serrano v. Priest*** in California, established state responsibility for school finance equity when state constitutions included appropriate equity language. But the ***Rodriguez v. San Antonio*** case in Texas denied equity advocates a federal remedy, because the U.S. Supreme Court held that education is not a fundamental right under the Constitution.

Since *Rodriguez*, in 1973, equity challenges brought in state court suits have forced revision of school finance systems in Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Kansas, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming as well as in Kentucky. In several states, the courts also called for broad reorganization to lessen the disparities in schooling outcomes between richer and poorer districts. As in Kentucky, significant governance reforms were sometimes included in this statewide schooling restructuring. (Berne 1988)

Nature of Governance Reforms

The four broad governance reforms this chapter reviews all create significant decentralized decision-making and stress parents as important participants in school-level decision processes. Because each reform uses different terms, some common definitions may prove useful. We use ***school-based management*** to mean locating the power to make decisions about budget, personnel, school organization, and curriculum at the school level. We use ***shared decision-making*** to mean how the varying school constituencies – administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents, and community – participate in the process of school-level decision-making.

Kentucky's reform gives considerable decision-making authority to a local school council of teachers, parents, and principal, but keeps significant power at district levels and

maintains local school boards as policy arbiters. Power over staff and principal hiring, curriculum (within state guidelines), and instructional organization is given to the school council, but budget decisions are split between the council and district, with the latter maintaining significant control over allocations to schools. Rather than developing school-based budgeting, Kentucky's reform assigns a proportional share of each school's allocation to the local council and provides additional state-generated discretionary funds for the Council's use. The reform gives the state education department increased powers to develop performance standards, assess school progress, reward improving schools, and sanction (and ultimately close) failing schools.

For **Chicago's** 540 schools, the comprehensive state reform legislation codified both the decisions to be made at the school level and who is to participate in making those decisions. The legislation also significantly reduced the power of the citywide board of education. Chicago's reform transforms local school councils into mini-school boards with parent majorities and gives these councils critical authority over school leadership through their power to hire and terminate school principals. (It gives principals, however, sole and expanded power to hire school staff.) The councils also have considerable power over local discretionary school funds. Chicago's reform lodges authority over curriculum with a Professional Personnel Advisory Committee composed primarily of teachers.

In **Los Angeles**, a process of shared decision-making was introduced to all of the system's schools, while a school-based management initiative was offered as a pilot program to 70 schools through a competitive proposal process. The Local School Leadership Councils mandated for every school have sizable teacher majorities and limited parent participation; they also have limited authority. Councils can determine some marginal school expenditures, but have no power over major budget allocations, personnel decisions, instructional organization, or curriculum policy. The school-based management initiative is essentially a school improvement program, with no real authority over budget, personnel, school organization, or curriculum. The only significant gain in the latter initiative is the ability to request waivers from systemwide regulations and procedures.

Dade County, Florida developed a pilot program for 32 schools, combining strong school-based management with weak shared decision-making. Dade's effort creates governing councils at each school with significant power over budget, personnel, school organization, and curriculum, as well as the right to request waivers from district and state rules, regulations, and contractual requirements. Because, however, the reform is nonprescriptive regarding the processes of shared decision-making, teachers dominate the councils and parents have limited power.

Table 4 summarizes the features of these reforms.

TABLE 4. Characteristics of Four Governance Reform Programs

Characteristics	Kentucky	Chicago	Los Angeles	Dade County
Target Population	Students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, and student education officials involved in, or responsible for, Kentucky's public schools.	Parents, community constituents, teachers, and administrators of public schools.	Teachers, administrators, and parents in public schools.	Teachers in all public schools.
Origins and Development	Lawsuit brought by Council of Basic Education in 1985 resulted in state supreme court's ruling state educational system unconstitutional in 1989 and requiring General Assembly to develop comprehensive reform. Assembly-appointed task force designed plan, passed by assembly and signed by governor in April 1990 as Kentucky's Education Reform Act (KERA).	School reform, education advocacy, civic, and business groups initiated campaign in 1987, which culminated in state legislative Act, revised and signed by Illinois governor in fall 1988. Act revised by legislature in 1991 as result of challenge to constitutionality by Principals' Association.	Negotiated by board of education and United Teachers of Los Angeles, spring, 1989 and codified in teachers' contract. Reform was also priority of new superintendent, previously of Dade County.	Original impetus from state legislative mandates in mid-1970s. District efforts to create school-based budgeting and decentralized decision-making since late 1970s. Specific initiative instituted with union support and introduced as pilot in 1987.
Scope	Restructures education and governance in Kentucky's approximately 1,400 schools.	All 540 of Chicago's schools.	Mandates shared decision-making in all LA schools in 1989-90, and creates school-based management pilot in 70 schools in 1990-91.	Creates school-based management in 32 pilot schools in 1987-88 and projects expansion to all district schools by 1991-92.
Goals	Supreme Court directed legislature to produce free, available, uniform system with equal opportunity and adequate education for all students. KERA revised state funding, governance, performance standards and assessment, teacher certification, and school and district accountability measures.	Improve schools and thereby improve students' academic achievement. Decentralize pyramidal administrative power. Lodge decision-making at the school level. Give parents primary decision-making power.	Improve student achievement by building trust; empowering teachers as on-site experts to make better decisions about schooling; lodging decision-making at school level.	Teacher professionalization: increase teacher participation in school management. Improvement in instruction through collaborative management. Improvement in student achievement as long-term result.

TABLE 4. Characteristics of Four Governance Reform Programs *(continued)*

Characteristics	Kentucky	Chicago	Los Angeles	Dade County
Components	KERA creates school-based decision-making through school council composed of principal, three teachers, two parents. Selection procedures are specified. All schools must implement SBDM by 1996. Powers of school councils include appointing staff and principal; designing curriculum and selecting technology; assigning staff and scheduling students; determining space usage and instructional policy; allocating funds for materials and student support services; disbursing discretionary state funds; determining responsibilities of parents, students, teachers, counselors, and principal; developing and implementing discipline policy.	Local school councils elected by mandated procedures in every school. Membership: six parents, two community representatives, two teachers and the administrator. Powers: appoints principal, who has contract but no tenure; develops and approves school improvement plan; develops and approves school budget, including Chapter I funds. Professional Personnel Advisory Committee composed of teachers, advises councils and principal about curriculum, staff development, school improvement, and budget issues.	Two components: Shared Decision-making (SDM) and School-based Management (SBM). SDM: Local school leadership council in every school. Membership: Council is 50 percent teachers, remainder parents, community representatives, and other school employees. Co-chaired by principal and union chapter leader. Councils determine some (minimal) school expenditures; calendar scheduling; use of school equipment; student discipline policy; staff development policy. SBM: Proposal process for participating schools. Guidelines for proposals: articulate vision, develop cost-effective plans requiring no additional funding; request waivers from counter-productive procedures; no negative effects on other schools.	Governing Council in each school. Every school decides structure of council and process of choosing members. Council has considerable power over curriculum, personnel, and budget. Each council determines areas of discretion and requests waivers of district rules and procedures, contractual requirements, and state education department regulations.
Resources Provided	Other than funding (see below), none thus far. No training for councils has yet been provided, nor has technical assistance or facilitation for councils been required.	Redirection of state Chapter I aid from central administration to schools. Training, facilitation, technical assistance, and information to Local School Councils.	Training for all local councils, as well as additional training for councils whose schools participate in School-based Management pilot.	Initial and in-service training for governing councils. Provision of funds for substitutes to facilitate council meetings.
Funding	Local school boards required to provide proportion of district's allocation to schools directly to school council for disbursement. State will develop formulas governing these allocations, and will also establish School Council Discretionary Fund to make additional grants to councils on a proportional student basis.	No new funds in Reform Act -- instead, redirection of funding decisions to school level. Redirection of state Chapter I funds from central administration to schools. Each local council also receives $1,500 in district funds for training. Foundation and business support for training, information, and resources.	Training provided by district and teachers union for all councils and School-based Management schools. No foundation resources.	District resources provide training, in-service, and support for meeting time.
Evaluations	A new statewide system, stressing performance-based evaluation, will attempt to measure progress across a wide range of indicators to determine school and district performance.	No evaluation procedures specified by Reform Act. Foundation-supported consortium formed to design comprehensive evaluation.	School board's Independent Analysis Unit conducts yearly evaluation of both SDM and SBM. No district plan for comprehensive evaluation.	Three-year evaluation by district, including both process (implementation variables) and outcomes (attitudinal change and student and school performance measures) covering 1987-90.

Origins of Reforms

Kentucky's reform developed from an effort to improve funding for poor school districts through a school finance suit. School funding in Kentucky had been both limited and unequal for many decades; the resulting educational outcomes were, by any measure, disastrous. The resulting lawsuit, brought by a coalition of poor districts, targeted the state constitutional requirement *"to provide for an efficient system of common schools throughout the state"* (Combs 1991, p. 4).

The Kentucky Supreme Court found for the plaintiffs in 1989 in a ruling that was startling in its scope and vision. The court held that the entire state school system, not simply its funding mechanisms, was unconstitutional:

The Kentucky Supreme Court held that the entire state school system, not simply its funding mechanisms, was unconstitutional.

> *This decision applies to the entire sweep of the system – all its parts and parcels. This decision applies to the statutes creating, implementing and financing the system. This decision covers the creation of local school districts, school boards, and the Kentucky Department of Education. It covers school construction and maintenance, teacher certification – the whole gamut of the common school system in Kentucky. Since we have, by this decision, declared the system of common schools in Kentucky to be unconstitutional, Section 183 places an absolute duty on the General Assembly to recreate, reestablish a new system of common schools in the Commonwealth. We view this decision as an opportunity for the General Assembly to launch the Commonwealth into a new era of educational opportunity which will ensure a strong economic, cultural, and political future.* (Rose v. *Council* 1989 *slip opin.* at 66, 67-68).

Faced with the court's sweeping mandate, the general assembly and the governor established the Task Force on Education Reform, which developed the comprehensive reform plan that the general assembly enacted as the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), signed into law by the governor in April 1990.

Chicago's two-decade effort to improve public education culminated in the Chicago School Reform Act, which the Illinois state legislature passed and the governor approved in December 1988. Chicago's reformers pursued fundamental change because their school system produced what many observers called the worst public education in America. The reform movement began with the election of Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor, in 1983. Several education advocacy groups active in Washington's campaign, including Designs for Change and the Chicago Panel for Public School Finance and Policy, pressed for citywide school reform as a centerpiece of the mayor's strategy

and published studies detailing the school system's dismal academic achievements and high dropout rates.

As Black and Latino community groups intensified their organizing, citywide business organizations concluded that more radical changes were necessary because their decade-long reform efforts had been frustrated by deliberate bureaucratic inaction. As reformers, advocates, community groups, and business organizations coalesced around an agenda for major reform, a monthlong teachers' strike closed schools, enraged parents, and further dramatized the school system's leadership crisis. Once the strike was settled, leaving bitterness on all sides, the pent-up rage and frustration of parents contributed new energies to the emerging coalition.

Because most of the constituencies active in the campaign, still firmly support the reform, the pressure to make school-level governance an effective lever for school improvement remains quite strong in Chicago.

This coalition built a large, well-funded, and strategically sophisticated campaign; developed a unified position on the major components of citywide reform; fought for passage of that reform in the state legislature; and then helped negotiate a legislative compromise with the governor that delivered the final bill. Because most of the constituencies active in the campaign, including many parent and community organizations, still firmly support the reform, the pressure to make school-level governance an effective lever for school improvement remains quite strong in Chicago.

The governance reforms initiated in **Los Angeles** in the 1989-90 school year were the result of negotiations between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) after a bitter nine-day teachers' strike. Disputes about who initiated the reforms suggests some of the underlying political tensions. UTLA's president (when the reforms were negotiated) claimed that the union had *"been pushing and massaging [for the reforms] since at least 1985"* (Speich 1989, p. 39). But the first-year review of shared decision-making in LAUSD by the district's Independent Analysis Unit challenged the belief that:

> *shared decision-making and school-based management was entirely a teacher union initiative on behalf of teacher professionalization and that a strike became necessary in order to extract this concession from District administrators whose goal was to preserve as much administrative power as possible. We found no awareness among teachers that Superintendent Britton was strongly identified with SBM/SDM, that some form of this program was supported by each party in collective bargaining, and that the pre-strike differences on this issue were relatively narrow.* (Rothstein 1990, p. 15)

The overall goal of the district's reform was to encourage the development of new strategies tailored to local schools, flattening the administrative structure, cutting the red tape of district administration, and focusing teachers' and principals' attention on instruction.

There *was*, however, clear agreement about the ultimate goal of student achievement. As Board of Education President Jackie Goldberg defined it: *"The goal is very simple – increase student achievement. If it doesn't raise student achievement, it will not have succeeded."* (Shuster 1989)

Official statements of the **Dade County** public schools, internal evaluations of the district's governance reform, and external evaluations by education reform groups all agree that the goal of the reform was teacher professionalization, defined as an effort to increase teacher participation in school management. Though parents and community representatives were mentioned as potential participants in school-based management and shared decision-making, teachers were defined as the principal targets for involvement. The overall goal of the district's reform, initiated in 1987 with 32 pilot schools and originally intended to include all district schools by the 1991-92 school year, was to:

> *encourage the development of new strategies tailored to local schools, flattening the administrative structure, cutting the red tape of district administration, and focusing teachers' and principals' attention on instruction.* (Hill and Bonan 1991, p. 83)

Since focus on instruction was a primary component of the overall goal, both Dade County reform groups and national observers have seen improvement in instruction and resulting improvement in student academic performance as an important outcome. Yet, the internal evaluation of the reform effort resists this linkage, arguing that because the reform attempts to improve teacher participation in decision-making, teacher morale, school climate, and staff collaboration, results should be evaluated primarily in terms of those categories. Though the internal evaluation reports student achievement data from standardized test scores,

> *this was done because many educators see achievement on such measures as the hallmark of effective education. It should be noted, however, that the research literature related to SBM and other types of restructuring initiatives is replete with references to the notion that the impact of many of the innovations which are installed is not adequately assessed by standardized achievement tests.* (Collins and Hanson 1991, p. ii)

Components of Reform

Kentucky

In addition to creating school-based management and shared decision-making, KERA funded preschools for at-risk four-year-olds and handicapped three- and four-year-olds; created family resource centers for disadvantaged elementary students and youth service centers for older students; mandated ungraded primary school programs for all K-3 students; set a guaranteed statewide per-pupil spending level and a system for reducing the disparities between rich and poor districts; created the teacher-led Professional Standards Board to certify teachers and improve teacher preparation; and developed a statewide accountability system to reward successful schools and districts and sanction poorly performing ones.

KERA introduced school-based decision-making, an amalgam of school-based management and shared decision-making, as a phase-in program. To implement the program, schools must develop a school council, composed of the principal, three teachers elected by the school's staff, and two parents selected by the school's parent-teacher organization or a similar body. School councils have broad authority and discretion to do the following:

... schools must develop a school council, composed of the principal, three teachers elected by the school's staff, and two parents selected by the school's parent-teacher organization...

- Set school policy, particularly to improve student achievement and help the school meet its performance goals.
- Appoint both staff and principals whenever vacancies occur.
- Identify and purchase needed instructional materials.
- Identify and allocate district-supplied funding for student support services.
- Define and adopt policies governing curriculum, staff time, school schedules, space usage, instructional planning, discipline, classroom management, extracurricular activities, technology usage, and responsibilities of all school constituents.

Chicago

As indicated above, the primary component of Chicago's reform is the Local School Council, composed of the principal, six parents, two community representatives, two teachers, and, in high schools, one student. Under the original 1989 law, representatives were separately elected by each constituency, but a legal challenge

brought by Chicago's Principal's Association resulted in a 1990 Illinois Supreme Court ruling that invalidated the initial election procedures.

In January 1991 and again in July of that year, the Illinois legislature established uniform voting procedures for parent, community, and teacher representatives. Anyone residing in a school's attendance zone can vote for five candidates vying for the eight parent/community seats. The board of education appoints teacher representatives after a nonbinding advisory poll is conducted among school staff. High schools appoint student members after a similar advisory poll among students. Carefully crafted nomination and voting procedures govern the election processes.

The local school councils have the power to hire and fire principals, develop school improvement plans, approve the budget for those plans, and allocate considerable new state funds disbursed to individual schools.

The local school councils have the power to hire and fire principals, develop school improvement plans, approve the budget for those plans, and allocate considerable new state funds disbursed to individual schools. Representatives from local councils can also serve on regional and citywide decision-making bodies.

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles governance reform introduced both a shared decision-making effort, mandated for all the system's schools, and a school-based management pilot, structured as a competitive proposal for 70 schools. The shared decision-making initiative requires local school leadership councils in every school; half of each council's members must be teachers, and the remainder are parents, community representatives, and other school employees. The principal and the teacher union chapter leader co-chair the council. Election procedures are specified and the elections are monitored.

The shared decision-making initiative gives school councils authority to decide staff development and staff training programs, guidelines for student discipline, scheduling of school events and activities, guidelines for use of school equipment, and some limited budget items. Under the school-based management initiative, pilot schools were required to develop proposals to articulate an education vision, improve academic achievement (with no additional funding), involve parents of traveling students (an important requirement, given the extent of intradistrict court-ordered busing), and produce no negative effects on other schools. As part of the plan, schools are allowed to request waivers from district procedures and regulations.

Dade County

Dade County's initiative mandates a governing council at each participating school, but allows schools to decide the structure of the council and the process of selecting members. Though the district's rhetoric encourages some parent participation, independent evaluations by advocacy groups, such as Citizens for Better Schools, indicate that actual parent participation is quite limited. Given the initiative's emphasis on teacher professionalization, and the failure to specify parent representation on the councils or to develop procedures for selecting parents, it is not surprising that Dade County's effort has given *"at most token, coopted roles to parents, while giving amply extended authority to principals and teachers"* (Peterson 1989, p. 32).

Resources, Funding, and Evaluation

Most of these reforms provide no significant new funding to school-based governing bodies. In Kentucky, local school boards must allocate a proportion of their regular school appropriation for instructional materials and student support services to the school councils for their disbursement. Similarly, the new state School Council Discretionary Fund is to establish a proportional student-based formula for distributing enhancement funds to school councils. Thus far, Kentucky's local school councils seem to have received little training or technical assistance.

In Chicago, the state reform law enforced the reallocation of state Chapter 1 funds from central administration to schools and gave the Local School Councils control over the disbursement of those quite significant school-level funds. (Many eligible schools receive more than $100,000 annually.) The state reform also allocated $1,500 annually per school to allow councils to contract for whatever training they wanted.

Chicago's foundations, universities, education reform and advocacy groups, and legal and business communities mounted a massive effort to train, assist, and support the newly elected councils.

Businesses, foundations, the board of education, and other nonprofit organizations have spent considerable sums to publicize the elections, help recruit candidates, and get out the vote. Sally O'Dowd, writing in *Catalyst*, a magazine established by Chicago's Community Renewal Society to chart the reform's progress, estimates at least a $5 million investment in the initial 1989 elections and a $2 million investment in the 1991 elections (O'Dowd, 1991 pp. 18-19)

Further, Chicago's foundations, universities, education reform and advocacy groups, and legal and business communities mounted a massive effort to train, assist, and support the newly elected councils. A survey conducted for the Chicago Donor's

Forum found that during 1990, the first full year of school reform, foundation grants for public school improvement in Chicago reached at least $12 million, 60 percent more than a comparable survey estimated for 1985 (Clements 1991, pp. 8-9). Many education reform groups, advocacy organizations, and higher education institutions are currently providing education and assistance to councils by building networks of participating schools.

Both the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Dade County public schools provided initial training and subsequent, though limited, annual training to councils in participating schools. Dade provided some funds to schools for teacher reimbursement or for substitutes to free teachers to attend council meetings. Los Angeles seems to have provided few additional resources to its shared decision-making initiative. Subsequent development of the school-based management effort in Los Angeles appears to have been halted by the district's severe budget crisis. Foundation, business, or externally supplied resources seem to have played no major role in either city.

Because these governance reforms were part of comprehensive restructuring efforts to improve student performance, built-in evaluation efforts focus on both student and school outcomes, as well as on the effectiveness of the governance mechanisms. KERA, for example, created a statewide accountability system using performance-based assessment to evaluate Kentucky's schools. Schools that show improvement will receive increased funding; those in which poor performance persists must develop improvement plans, could have out-of-district master teachers assigned to change their operations, and could ultimately be closed. Kentucky's school districts are subject to similar accountability requirements.

Chicago's reform law established no evaluation mechanisms or accountability procedures to assess the results of reform. To fill this gap, several foundation-supported conferences reviewed the limitations of the school system's assessment procedures and outcome indicators, and called for concerted effort to generate adequate assessment measures and accountability processes as well as an overall evaluation design responsive to the comprehensive goals of the reform. The Consortium on Chicago School Research, *"an affiliation of local universities, professional associations, education research and advocacy groups, and the Chicago Public Schools,"* has published *A Commentary and Recommendations on the Indicators for Assessing Reform in the Chicago Public Schools' Systemwide Plan, A Research Agenda* and *Charting Reform: the Teachers' Turn*. Numerous other scholars,

reform groups, and national commentators have published reports assessing the reform's progress.

In Los Angeles, the school board's Independent Analysis Unit conducted an evaluation of the initial shared decision-making and school-based management initiatives, but there seems to be no district plan for comprehensive evaluation. (As a division of the school board, the Unit is independent of district administration – and control.) The Dade County public schools has produced both yearly interim reports and a comprehensive three-year summative evaluation, covering 1987-88 through 1989-90, of the district's reform project. This evaluation includes surveys of teachers covering attitudes, expectations, and nature of participation; a survey of principals covering attitudes to the reform; a general school climate questionnaire; and a series of more traditional outcome measures, such as test scores, attendance, suspensions, and dropouts.

Implementation: Problems and Barriers

Kentucky's reform was developed to carry out the state supreme court's ruling that the entire educational system be reconstructed; by 1996, for instance, all schools are required to implement school-based decision-making. Though initial participation in the governance component has been characterized as hesitant, the reform act's goal of having at least one school in each district begin implementing the reform in 1991-92 has been met. By early July 1991, teachers had voted to begin school-based decision-making in almost 300 schools in 133 districts, and the remaining 40 districts had designated schools to participate. Thus, during the 1991-92 school year, almost 25 percent of Kentucky's schools were implementing school-based decision-making, the great majority of them through the choice of their faculties. (Sexton 1991)

... the reform act's goal of having at least one school in each district begin implementing the reform in 1991-92 has been met.

Reform advocates were initially disappointed about the pace of school participation. Some district superintendents suggested that teachers were concerned about the extensive time the reforms might require. Other observers wondered whether superintendents and school boards reluctant to cede power to strong parent councils might be intimidating potential participants. Indeed, a few school districts tried to revise the reform act's requirements by changing council composition to reduce parent roles or denying school councils the powers KERA assigned them. But as the 1991-92 school year progressed, reform supporters seemed content with the pace of implementation. Although a survey conducted for Partnership for Kentucky School Reform in 1991 found widespread ignorance of KERA among both parents and nonparents, those who did know KERA tended to support it,

particularly the school-based decision-making component (Horizon Research International 1991).

The overarching goal of **Chicago's** school reform was to improve student academic achievement. The resulting plan was unabashedly populist – lodging critical school decision-making with an elected council, composed primarily of parents, at the school level, reversing the pyramidal structure of centralized administrative power.

During the initial Local School Council election in October 1989, some 17,000 parent and community candidates ran for 5,400 positions; approximately 320,000 people, 16 percent of Chicago's registered citizens, voted. Parent turnout was estimated at 35 percent in elementary schools and 12 percent in high schools. Local School Council racial composition closely mirrored school student body composition, and the election doubled the number of Black and Latino school board members across the country. (*Closer Look* 1991)

In the second election, in October 1991, some 8,000 candidates ran and 118,000 adults voted, a drop of about 52 percent and 45 percent respectively. Approximately 8 percent of Chicago's registered voters participated in the election (*Closer Look* 1991). Approximately 60 percent of the council members elected in 1991 were newcomers.

Reversing the traditional distribution of schooling power and attempting to lodge governance at the school level has created new and difficult problems. In a series of papers and reports sponsored by the Joyce and MacArthur foundations, national experts and local reformers have identified critical issues complicating successful implementation:

- Capacity of local school councils to become effective policy-making bodies, and the necessity for comprehensive, differentiated training to support their efforts;
- Capacity of principals to carry out their new and complicated roles and the necessity for effective training to support their efforts;
- Transforming the central administration into a support service for schools and changing the administrative culture from command (and obstruction) to support;
- Developing the professional personnel advisory committees into advisory bodies that engage teachers effectively and

involving the Chicago Teachers Union in both the committees and the entire reform process;

- Replacing the present patchwork of Chicago's outcome and performance indicators with a comprehensive system for assessing student achievement as the centerpiece of a more elaborated design to evaluate the results of Chicago's school reform. (Finn and Clements 1990)

In addition to these systemic problems, reformers and advocates identified a series of city and state counterefforts that posed significant impediments. During the 1990-91 school year, Chicago's superintendent proposed a shift of administrative staff from central education headquarters to the 11 subdistrict administrative offices. After the reform coalition mobilized fierce opposition to this effort, the plan was dropped, and no large staff transfers to subdistricts subsequently occurred.

The Chicago Principals' Association brought a lawsuit to restore the lifetime tenure for principals, which the reform had removed. The principals' lawsuit also challenged the election procedures for the councils. When the Illinois Supreme Court upheld this challenge in November 1990, not only the 1989 elections but the role and functions of the councils were threatened. The reform coalition launched an emergency campaign to draft enabling legislation to correct the reform law and validate all past actions of the councils. Once the state legislature passed this corrective act in early January 1991, the reform coalition developed a unified citywide stance on new election procedures that would withstand legal challenge. The legislature passed these provisions, reflecting a consensus achieved through a series of compromises, in July 1991.

... the school system's continuing budget crisis led to several efforts by the Chicago superintendent to divert funds from local councils to defray systemic deficits.

Finally, the school system's ongoing budget crisis led to several efforts by the Chicago superintendent to divert funds from local councils to defray systemic deficits. Throughout the summer of 1991, the reform coalition mobilized to defeat these efforts, to reject school closings and consolidations, and to oppose other budget reductions that created inequities or removed funding from the councils' jurisdiction. All these efforts diverted energies critical to building and supporting the Local School Councils.

Citing these and similar problems, observers concerned about the success of Chicago's reform have questioned its durability:

> *This nest of woes – the difficulties of educating severely disadvantaged kids, management glitches, funding troubles, the superintendent's and board's credibility gap and an*

> *unsupportive political environment – appears to us to be contributing to an ominous development.* (Finn and Clements 1992, p. 11)

Nevertheless, although Chicago's reform is not yet three years old, ample evidence points to successful development and encouraging trends. By March 1990, 30 percent of the system's principals were new; by July 1991, estimates indicated a principal turnover rate approaching 50 percent. A survey of Chicago public elementary school teachers sponsored by the Consortium on Chicago School Research in 1991 found that:

> *citywide, teachers are moderately positive. About 60 percent agreed that their school is getting better and that they are more optimistic about improvement since reform began. More than half said that they felt better about working in their school. Less than one-fifth of the teachers expressed strong negative attitudes about school reform. The data indicate considerable teacher support but they also indicate that a substantial proportion of faculty have at least some reservations.* (*Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn* 1991, p. 3)

... evidence even suggests that some of the system's most poorly performing schools... 50 percent to 100 percent low-income, have begun to make significant gains in reading achievement...

Initial evidence even suggests that some of the system's most poorly performing schools, with student populations that are 50 percent to 100 percent low-income, have begun to make significant gains in reading achievement as measured by state standardized tests (Moore 1992).

A reform as comprehensive as Chicago's must be assessed by equally broad measures, especially when such a radical change challenges the deepest convictions of reformers, advocates and observers across the ideological spectrum. Initial evidence indicates that the governance mechanisms are firmly in place and that the chaos, dissension, and polarization opponents predicted has not materialized. Other evidence suggests that a significant administrative leadership shift, which may augur well for school improvement, is under way, and that many councils are engaging the policy issues critical to instructional improvement. Given the scale of training, assistance and support mobilized by the education, advocacy, business, and nonprofit sectors for the reform, subsequent evaluation may well demonstrate that the reform is producing significant school improvement throughout the Chicago system.

In **Los Angeles**, both the school board and the teachers' union defined the ultimate goal of the governance reforms as the improvement of student achievement. City and state leadership also hailed these reforms as a route to better student performance. Shared decision-making, mandated for all Los Angeles schools, was

introduced during the 1989-90 school year; all the system's schools were expected to adopt it during the following year.

School-based management was introduced as a competitive proposal process; during the summer of 1990, more than half of the 70 eligible pilot schools submitted their school-based management proposals. The 24-member Central Council on Shared Decision-Making and School-Based Management supervised a subsequent submission and review process. Eventually, the superintendent, the citywide school board, UTLA – the oversight troika required by the teachers' union contract – approved more than 40 school plans. They asked other schools to make revisions and resubmit. Thus, by the 1991-92 school year, all Los Angeles schools were involved in shared decision-making, almost 50 schools were involved in a school-based management effort, and almost two dozen others were improving their school-based management proposals.

... once the shared decision-making reform began... the district's leaders began to reduce their expectations...

The Los Angeles school district and UTLA provided initial training for shared decision-making to all members of the Local School Leadership Councils at the start of the 1989-90 school year. Subsequent yearly fall and winter sessions provided training in conflict management, consensus-building, problem-solving, networking, other group dynamics, and parent outreach and involvement. The district has provided additional training to schools participating in the school-based management pilot program.

But once the shared decision-making reform began in local schools, the slow pace and limited discretion of the district's scheme became apparent, and the district's leaders began to reduce their expectations for improvement in student performance. *"It's not going to revolutionize the schools,"* school board president Jackie Goldberg said. *"The first step is overcoming historic hostility and distrust – and to figure out how everyone is going to work together. The real power will come with school-based management."*

Wayne Johnson, then UTLA president, sounded a similar note: *"The actual effects on the schools as far as academic performance [are] certainly not going to be revolutionary this year. We didn't get into this predicament overnight and we're not going to get out of it overnight."* (Shuster 1989)

Moreover, the reputed origins of governance reform in teacher union demands reinforced a growing perception that the changes were designed primarily to benefit teachers. The 50 percent teacher membership required on all councils was attacked for providing too limited a role for parents. Rita Walters, South-Central Los Angeles longtime board member, saw the stress on

teacher representation as *"an attempt to cut them [parents] out, and I don't think they will have enough representation."* Walters argued that shared decisions require *"equal entities – a third teachers, a third parents and a third administrators and classified staff."* (Shuster 1989)

The Independent Analysis Unit's review of the initial year of shared decision-making identified a number of problems and barriers. Assessing the five areas of local council decision-making, the Unit concluded that *"the funds which leadership councils controlled were small compared to those they did not control,"* particularly Chapter 1 and bilingual funds, the vast bulk of discretionary monies at local schools. It estimated that only 20 percent *"of all local school discretionary resources were under the control of local school leadership councils in 1989-90."* (IAS 1990, p. 6) Worse, the district cut some of those limited discretionary funds, thereby leaving local councils already frustrated by their spending limits even more suspicious of the district's intentions.

... the Analysis Unit concluded that the antagonism between teachers and administrators limited collegiality and collaboration among school council members.

The review showed that the councils made only minor scheduling and staff development decisions. Decisions about equipment focused on use of copying machines and were made predominantly by teachers in discussions that often perplexed and isolated the councils' parent representatives. In contrast, school discipline issues engaged most councils, and decisions on discipline tended to involve all participants. But the scope of the five areas of discretion for local councils seems, thus far, quite limited in terms of overall school improvement and heavily weighted toward teachers' working conditions concerns.

In terms of barriers, the Analysis Unit concluded that the antagonism between teachers and administrators limited collegiality and collaboration among school council members. It perceived principals as exerting limited leadership because they were unsure of their role and uncertain about district support, and urged training, evaluation, and placement of principals with strong leadership skills and commitment to SBM/SDM. The Unit also identified constraining time demands on teacher council members, overlapping responsibilities of a multiplicity of mandated school advisory councils, and the need for more intensive training about school improvement for councils as problems that surfaced in the first year of shared decision-making.

Although **Dade County** schooling authorities initially defined the goal of the school-based management/school decision-making pilot project as teacher professionalization, some redefinition of goals, by both adherents and critics, has occurred since implementation. Late in 1989, the third year of the pilot

project, Joseph Gomez, an internal evaluation coordinator, defined program goals as:

> *to improve the education program, to increase the focus of school system resources at the school level, to initiate shared decision making at the school level, and to increase community participation in the schools.* (Gomez 1989, p. 21)

Gomez's evaluation unit summarized the problems that most school councils encountered: unrealistic expectations, provincial perspectives, difficulties assuming new roles, problems conducting meetings, increased workload, burnout, internal feuding, principal domination of process, and problems related to school size. But according to Citizens for Better Schools, a Dade County education reform group, the major problems the pilot project experienced were these:

- A proliferating school bureaucracy that complicated the management of the reform;
- Limited or imprecise student achievement goals for participating;
- A rise in interethnic group conflict within project schools;
- A failure to involve parents or students in meaningful roles in school governance.

Citizens for Better Schools was particularly critical of the failure of parent involvement:

> *Meaningful parent participation in governance is generally unwelcome in the Dade County Schools. The whole SBM/SDM experiment is predicated on increasing teacher involvement in governance, while excluding parents as far as practicable. Parents on the school governing council are often chosen by the principal, rather than elected by the parents. In some schools, parents on the school governing council are excluded from meetings dealing with certain issues. Some schools have no parent representatives whatsoever on governing councils.* (Peterson 1989, p. 4)

Both the three-year internal evaluation and the Citizens for Better Schools' study focused on outcome indicators such as test scores, attendance, and dropout rates as well as on survey data about teacher attitudes and school climate changes. Both reported that state standardized reading and math test scores were lower in project schools than in all Dade County public schools. The district's evaluation demonstrated a decline in pilot schools'

dropout rates, but no difference in attendance between pilot schools and the rest of the system. Climate indicators were higher for project schools, collegiality among staff in project schools increased, and teacher attitudes toward the reform were still favorable after three years.

Brian Peterson, principal author of the Citizens for Better Schools' studies, concluded that *"school-based management/shared decision-making by itself does not improve student academic achievement in the average school districtwide and is associated with test-score declines in the average inner-city school"* (Peterson 1991, p 26). To link this strategy more closely with improved student achievement, Peterson urged a system of teacher bonuses tied to improved student and school performance on a range of outcome measures; state intervention to improve failing schools; and school improvement councils, with a two-thirds parent/community business composition, to assess school performance, write school improvement plans, and recommend retention or replacement of the school's principal. The last recommendation reproduces the primary component of Chicago's governance reform.

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Chapter 6:

Conclusion

Almost all of the 18 programs examined in this report are new interventions into schooling, developed during the last decade. The ten highlighted in chapters two and three were initiated to help parents support their children's development, increase their children's learning capacity, and improve their children's school performance. The eight analyzed in chapters four and five define parent involvement as a central focus of school improvement or governance reforms.

Constituency Focus

Of the ten programs focusing directly on working with parents to improve their children's academic capacity, four target low-income and disadvantaged families. The CSCD is located in one of the poorest census districts in the country, and HIPPY usually selects low-income neighborhoods as program sites. Both the Kenan Family Literacy Project and the Family Readers Program also tend to choose program sites in low-income settings. Although Missouri's PAT Program is structured as a statewide universal effort, the program makes specific attempts to reach low-income and disadvantaged families.

The five programs that help parents of school-age students support their children's learning are all structured as universal programs rather than targeted to specific constituencies. Yet, each has developed components to increase program effectiveness with low-income and disadvantaged parents. The Family Study Institute, Family Math and Science Programs, and Megaskills all recruit and train parents as teachers and trainers of other parents. Family Math and Science and Megaskills specifically recruit community leaders as teachers; they also use local organizations such as churches and youth centers as sites for training sessions, to reduce the barriers school-based programs often generate. QEP has thus far targeted most of its specific programs to low-income districts, and the TransParent School Model has ensured that evaluations of program effectiveness assess differences in parent usage across class or race.

Three of the four comprehensive school improvement programs stressing parent involvement as a critical focus – The School Development Program, Accelerated Schools, and the Center for Collaborative Education – target schools and districts serving low-income and disadvantaged students. The fourth program, the League of Schools Reaching Out, has welcomed membership from any school committed to developing family-school-community partnerships, but many of its member schools serve disadvantaged constituencies.

The four major governance reforms are universal programs seeking to involve parents in school decision-making, throughout one state and three large urban districts. Nevertheless, most of Kentucky's public school students come from less-than-affluent families, and the public schools in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Dade County serve predominantly low-income and minority constituencies.

Therefore, whether these 18 programs specifically target low-income communities, shape program components to ensure receptivity to disadvantaged families, or attempt to be universal, their actual patterns of service are directed to predominantly low-income and disadvantaged families.

Program Origins

University or nonprofit origins provided the independence, flexibility and resources to create the leverage necessary to intervene effectively... as well as the clout required to maintain program integrity.

The four broad governance reforms all developed from a complex interplay of political, legislative, juridical, and constituency forces. No specific entity piloted or produced these reforms. But the other 14 programs represent specific interventions by agents operating from outside local school systems. Of these programs, 10 were developed by university faculty, most within research institutes or equivalent settings focused on child development and schooling improvement. Of the other four, one (CSCD) was generated directly by a foundation committed to healthy youth development; two (Megaskills and QEP) were created by nonprofit organizations committed to improving the extent and quality of parent involvement in schooling; and one (the Center for Collaborative Education) is the outreach arm of a network of teacher-generated, learner-centered public schools.

Thus, 14 of the 18 programs we have examined were initiated independently of school system authority, direction, or sponsorship. University or nonprofit origins provided the independence, flexibility and resources to create the leverage necessary to intervene effectively, at school and district levels as well as the clout required to maintain program integrity.

External Financial Support

The four broad governance reforms are supported by public funds, through court-mandated new allocation, legislative reallocation, or district redirection of existing funds. In addition, significant foundation and corporate resources have supported Chicago's reform.

The other 14 programs have been supported, from their inception, by a mix of federal funds from programs such as Even Start and JTPA, supplemented by state child care and education allocations. Considerable foundation support has also helped

sustain most of these programs. This mix of external public- and private-sector funding has allowed these programs to operate in local schools and districts without becoming dependent on district financial support. Moreover, the aggregate of public and private support provided to these programs represents a significant new investment in helping parents support their children's development, learning capacity, and public school performance.

Receptivity to Cultural Diversity

The 14 programs examined in the first three chapters recognize that disparities between home cultures and school culture create difficulties for children's success in schooling and sustain barriers to effective parent involvement; each has developed strategies to reduce those barriers. HIPPY and the CSCD, for example, recruit and train neighborhood parents as outreach workers. Family Math and Science and Megaskills site programs in community organizations. The QEP translates all its materials into the languages of each constituency, and hires local facilitators fluent in those languages. Both the School Development Program and the Center for Collaborative Education have developed specific governance structures through which parents shape children's developmental experiences or assessment strategies to reduce the gaps between home and school cultures.

... the strategies attempt to make schools more flexible, responsive, and culturally sophisticated institutions.

In the new decision-making settings the four broad governance reforms have created, many local school teams have addressed, and begun to narrow, the distances between home and school cultures that reduce student academic achievement and limit parent involvement. Because all of the programs reviewed in this report recognize, to some extent, the strengths rather than the deficits of the diverse families that make up the constituencies of public schooling, their strategies attempt to build on those strengths to make schools more flexible, responsive, and culturally sophisticated institutions.

Extent of Parent Empowerment

All of these programs affirm the necessity to involve parents as active participants in, rather than as passive clients of, efforts to improve their children's learning capacities, schooling experience, and academic performance. Each program has developed specific strategies to empower parents. PAT, Kenan Family Literacy, and the CSCD, for example, all provide direct education to parents about the processes of child development. The Family Readers Program, the Family Study Institute, and Megaskills provide classes and workshops about how parents can most effectively support their children's school learning. All four of the school improvement programs described in Chapter 3 define

critical roles for parents in their school restructuring processes. Each of the four governance reforms defines parents as key participants; in Kentucky's and Chicago's reforms, parents are indeed critical members of school governance teams, with considerable decision-making power over curriculum, budget, personnel, and instructional organization.

... it is possible that a new generation of parents... will emerge to transform schools that have traditionally miseducated and underserved too many of our nation's children.

Thus, parent empowerment – defined as providing the structures to help parents become active participants in shaping their children's development, learning capacity, and school experience – is a critical component of all these programs. Because most of these programs target schools and districts serving low-income and disadvantaged constituencies, it is possible that a new generation of parents, honed by their experience of active participation in shaping their children's schooling, will emerge to transform schools that have traditionally miseducated and underserved too many of our nation's children.

The 18 programs highlighted in this report therefore share, in varying degrees, the following components, which represent new directions in parent involvement:

- A strong commitment to involve low-income and disadvantaged parents in activities ultimately aimed at improving student academic achievement;
- Origins in universities or nonprofit institutions, with resulting sponsorship, implementation, and evaluation maintained by these external institutions;
- Significant public-sector support through funding from federal grants, state legislative allocation, or district buy-in as well as private-sector support through foundation or corporate grants;
- A strong commitment to reduce the gap between home and school cultures by shaping program components to respond to, and build on, the values, structures, and languages of home cultures;
- A strong commitment to develop program components so that parents are empowered by their participation.

Hopefully, these new directions will help sustain broad new parent constituencies in supporting their children's education and improving their children's schools.

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